OEDIPUS.

(3s)

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at

His HIGHNESS the DUKE of YORK's THEATER.

Written by

Mr. *DRYDEN* and Mr. *LEE*.

Hi proprium decus & partum indignantur honorem,
Ni teneant ——— Virg.

Vos exemplaria Græca,
Nocturna verſate manu, verſate diurna Horat.

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PREFACE.

THOUGH it be dangerous to raise too great an Expectation, especially in Works of this Nature, where we are to please an unsatiable Audience, yet 'tis reasonable to prepossess them in Favour of an Author, and therefore both the *Prologue* and *Epilogue* inform'd you, That *OEdipus* was the most celebrated Piece of all Antiquity: That *Sophocles*, not only the greatest Wit, but one of the greatest Men in *Athens*, made it for the Stage at the Publick Cost, and that it had the Reputation of being his Master-piece, not only amongst the Seven of his which are still remaining, but of the greater Number which are perish'd. *Aristotle* has more than once admir'd it in his Book of Poetry, *Horace* has mention'd it: *Lucullus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and other Noble *Romans*, have written on the same Subject, though their Poems are wholly lost; but *Seneca*'s is still preserv'd. In our own Age, *Corneille* has attempted it, and, it appears by his Preface, with great Success: But a judicious Reader will easily observe, how much the Copy is inferior to the Original. He tells you himself, that he owes a great part of his Success to the happy Episode of *Theseus* and *Dirce*; which is the same Thing, as if we should acknowledge, that we were indebted for our good Fortune, to the Underplot of *Adrastus*, *Eurydice*, and *Creon*. The Truth is, he miserably fail'd in the Character of his Hero: If he desir'd that *OEdipus* should be pitied, he should have made him a better Man. He forgot that *Sophocles* had taken care to shew him in his first Entrance, a Just, a Merciful, a Successful, a Religious Prince, and in short, a Father of his Country: Instead of these, he has drawn him suspicious, designing, more anxious of keeping the *Theban* Crown, than solicitous for the Safety of his People: Hector'd by *Theseus*, contemn'd by *Dirce*, and scarce maintaining a second Part in his own Tragedy. This was an Error in the first Concoction; and therefore never to be mended in the second, or the third: He introduc'd a greater Heroe than *OEdipus* himself; for when *Theseus* was once there, that Companion of *Hercules* must yield to none: The Poet was oblig'd to furnish him with Business, to make him an Equipage suitable

to his Dignity, and by following him too cloſe, to loſe his other King of *Brentford* in the Crowd. *Seneca* on the other ſide, as if there were no ſuch Thing as Nature to be minded in a Play, is always running after pompous Expreſſions, pointed Sentences, Philoſophical Notions, more proper for the Study than the Stage: The *Frenchman* follow'd a wrong Scent; and the *Roman* was abſolutely at cold Hunting. All we could gather out of *Corneille*, was, that an Epiſode muſt be, but not his way. And *Seneca* ſupply'd us with no new Hint, but only a Relation which he makes of his *Tirèſias* raiſing the Ghoſt of *Lajus*; which is here perform'd in view of the Audience, the Rites and Ceremonies ſo far his, as he agreed with Antiquity, and the Religion of the *Greeks*: But he himſelf was beholden to *Homer*'s *Tireſias* in the *Odyſſes* for ſome of them; and the reſt have been collected from *Helidore*'s *Æthiopiques*, and *Lucan*'s *Erictho*. *Sophocles* indeed is admirable every where; and therefore we have follow'd him as cloſe as poſſibly we could. But the *Athenian* Theater (whether more perfect than ours, is not now diſputed) had a Perfection differing from ours. You ſee there in every Act a ſingle Scene, (or two at moſt) which manage the Buſineſs of the Play, and after that ſucceeds the *Chorus*, which commonly takes up more time in Singing, than there has been employ'd in Speaking. The Principal Perſon appears almoſt conſtantly through the Play; but the Inferior Parts ſeldom above once in the whole Tragedy. The Conduct of our Stage is much more difficult, where we are oblig'd never to loſe any conſiderable Character which we have once preſented. Cuſtom likewiſe has obtain'd, that we muſt form an Under-plot of ſecond Perſons, which muſt be depending on the firſt, and their By-walks muſt be like thoſe in a Labyrinth, which all of 'em lead into the great Parterre: Or like ſo many ſeveral lodging Chambers, which have their Out-lets into the ſame Gallery. Perhaps after all, if we could Think ſo, the antient Method, as 'tis the eaſieſt, is alſo the moſt Natural, and the Beſt. For Variety, as 'tis manag'd, is too often ſubject to breed Diſtraction: And while we would pleaſe too many ways, for want of Art in the Conduct, we pleaſe in none. But we have given you more already than was neceſſary for a Preface, and for ought we know, may gain no more by our Inſtructions,

than

than that Politick Nation is like to do, who have taught their Enemies to fight ſo long, that at laſt they are in a Condition to invade them.

PROLOGUE.

WHEN Athens *all the* Græcian *State did guide,*
And Greece *gave Laws to all the World beſide,*
Then Sophocles *with* Socrates *did ſit,*
Supreme in Wiſdom one, and one in Wit:
And Wit from Wiſdom differ'd not in thoſe,
But as 'twas ſung in Verſe, or ſaid in Proſe.
Then, OEdipus, *on crowded Theatres,*
Drew all admiring Eyes and liſt'ning Ears:
The pleas'd Spectator ſhouted every Line,
The nobleſt, manlieſt, and the beſt Deſign!
And ev'ry Critick of each learned Age,
By this juſt Model has reform'd the Stage.
Now, ſhould it fail, (as Heav'n avert our Fear!
Damn it in Silence, leaſt the World ſhould hear.
For were it known this Poem did not Pleaſe,
You might ſet up for perfect Savages.
Your Neighbours would not look on you as Men,
But think the Nation all turn'd Picts *agen.*
Faith, as you manage Matters, 'tis not fit
You ſhould ſuſpect your Selves of too much Wit,
Drive not the Jeſt too far, but ſpare this Piece;
And, for this once, be no more Wiſe than Greece.
See twice! Do not pell-mell to Damning fall,
Like true-born Britains, *who ne'er think at all.*
Pray be adviſ'd; and though at Mons *you won,*
On pointed Cannon do not always run,
With ſome reſpect to antient Wit proceed;
You take the four firſt Councils for your Creed.
But, when you lay Tradition wholly by,
And on the private Spirit alone rely,
You turn Fanaticks in your Poetry.
If, notwithſtanding all that we can ſay,
You needs will have your pen'worths of the Play:
And come reſolv'd to Damn, becauſe you pay,
Record it, in Memorial of the Fact,
The firſt Play bury'd ſince the Woolen Act.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

OEdipus	Mr. *Betterton.*
Adraſtus	Mr. *Smith.*
Creon	Mr. *Samford.*
Tireſias	Mr. *Harris.*
Hæmon	Mr. *Crosby*
Alcander	Mr. *Williams.*
Diocles	Mr. *Norris.*
Pyracmon	Mr. *Boman.*
Phorbas	Mr. *Gillo.*
Dymas.	
Ægeon.	
Ghoſt of Lajus	Mr. *Williams.*

WOMEN.

Jocaſta	Mrs. *Betterton.*
Eurydice	Mrs. *Lee.*
Manto	Mrs. *Evans.*

Prieſts, Citizens, Attendants, *&c.*

SCENE, *THEBES.*

OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Curtain riſes to a plaintive Tune, repreſenting the preſent Condition of THEBES; *dead Bodies appear at a Diſtance in the Streets; ſome faintly go over the Stage, others drop.*

Enter Alcander, Diocles *and* Pyracmon.

ALCANDER.

METhinks we ſtand on ruins; Nature ſhakes
About us; and the univerſal Frame
So looſe, that it but wants another Puſh
To leap from off its Hindges. [Globe
Dioc. No Sun to chear us, but a bloody
That rowls above; a bald and beamleſs Fire;
His Face o'er-grown with Scurf: The Sun's ſick too;
Shortly he'll be an Earth.
Pyr. Therefore the Seaſons
Lie all confus'd; and, by the Heav'n's neglected,
Forget themſelves: Blind Winter meets the Summer
In his Mid way, and, ſeeing not his Livery,
Has driv'n him headlong back: And the raw Damps
With flaggy Wings fly heavily about,
Scattering their Peſtilential Colds and Rheums
Through all the lazy Air.

Alc.

Alc. Hence Murrains follow'd on bleating Flocks,
And on the lowing Herds: At last, the Malady
Grew more Domestick, and the Faithful Dog
Dy'd at his Master's Feet.

Dioc. And next his Master:
For all those Plagues which Earth and Air had brooded,
First on inferiour Creatures try'd their Force;
And last they seiz'd on Man.

Pyr. And then a Thousand Deaths at once advanc'd,
And ev'ry Dart took place; all was so sudden,
That scarce a first Man fell; one but began
To wonder, and straight fell a Wonder too;
A third, who stoop'd to raise his dying Friend,
Dropt in the pious Act. Heard you that Groan?

[*Groan within.*

Dioc. A Troop of Ghosts took flight together there:
Now Death's grown riotous, and will play no more
For single Stakes, but Families and Tribes.
How are we sure we breathe not now our last,
And that next Minute,
Our Bodies cast into some common Pit,
Shall not be built upon, and overlaid by half a People?

Alc. There's a Chain of Causes
Link'd to Effects; invincible Necessity
That whate'er is, could not but so have been;
That's my Security. [*To them, enter* Creon.

Cre. So had it need, when all our Streets lie cover'd
With Dead and Dying Men;
And Earth exposes Bodies on the Pavements
More than she hides in Graves!
Betwixt the Bride and Bridegroom have I seen
The Nuptial Torch do common Offices
Of Marriage and of Death.

Dioc. Now, *OEdipus*,
(If he return from War, our other Plague)
Will scarce find half he left, to grace his Triumphs.

Pyr. A feeble Pæan will be sung before him.

Alc. He would do well to bring the Wives and Children
Of conquer'd *Argians* to renew his *Thebes*. [dren.

Cre. May Funerals meet him At

At the City Gates, with their deteſted Omen.
Dioc. Of his Children
Cre. Nay, tho' ſhe be my Siſter, of his Wife.
Alc. O that our *Thebes* might once again behold
A Monarch *Theban* born!
Dioc. We might have had one.
Pyr. Yes, had the People pleas'd.
Cre. Come you're my Friends.
The Queen my Siſter, after *Lajus*'s Death,
Fear'd to lie ſingle; and ſupply'd his Place
With a young Succeſſor.
Dioc. He much reſembles her former Husband too.
Alc. I always thought ſo.
Pyr. When Twenty Winters more have grizzl'd his [black Locks,
He will be very *Lajus*.
Cre. So he will:
Mean time ſhe ſtands provided of a *Lajus*,
More young and vigorous too, by Twenty Springs.
Theſe Women are ſuch cunning Purveyors!
Mark where their Appetites have once been pleas'd,
The ſame Reſemblance in a younger Lover
Lies brooding in their Fancies the ſame Pleaſures,
And urges their Remembrance to Deſire.
Dioc. Had Merit, not her Dotage, been conſider'd,
Then *Creon* had been King; but *OEdipus*,
A Stranger!
Cre. That Word Stranger, I confeſs,
Sounds harſhly in my Ears.
Dioc. We are your Creatures.
The People prone, as in all general Ills,
To ſudden Change; the King in Wars abroad;
The Queen, a Woman weak and unregarded;
Eurydice the Daughter of Dead *Lajus*,
A Princeſs young and beauteous, and unmarried.
Methinks from theſe disjointed Propoſitions,
Something might be produc'd.
Cre. The Gods have done
Their Part, by ſending this commodious Plague.
But oh, the Princeſs! her hard Heart is ſhut
By Adamantine Locks againſt my Love.

Alc.

Alc. Your Claim to her is ſtrong: You are betroth'd.
Pyr. True; in her Nonage.
Dioc. I heard the Prince of *Argus*, young *Adraſtus*,
When he was Hoſtage here-----
Cre. Oh Name him not! the Bane of all my Hopes;
That hot-brain'd, head-long Warrior, has the Charms
Of Youth, and ſomewhat of a lucky Raſhneſs,
To pleaſe a Woman yet more Fool than he.
That thoughtleſs Sex is caught by outward Form,
And empty Noiſe, and loves it ſelf in Man.
Alc. But ſince the War broke out about our Frontiers,
He's now a Foe to *Thebes*.
Cre. But is not ſo to her; ſee, ſhe appears;
Once more I'll prove my Fortune: You inſinuate
Kind Thoughts of me into the Multitude;
Lay load upon the Court; gull 'em with Freedom;
And you ſhall ſee 'em toſs their Tails, and gad,
As if the Breeze had ſtung 'em.
Dioc. We'll about it. [*Exeunt* Alc. Dioc. *and* Pyr.

Enter Eurydice.

Cre. Hail, Royal Maid; thou bright *Eurydice*!
A laviſh Planet reign'd when thou wert born;
And made thee of ſuch kindred-mold to Heav'n,
Thou ſeem'ſt more Heav'n's than ours.
Eur. Caſt round your Eyes;
Where late the Streets were ſo thick ſown with Men,
Like *Cadmus* Brood they juſtled for the Paſſage.
Now look for thoſe erected Heads, and ſee 'em
Like Pebbles paving all our publick Ways:
When you have thought on this, then anſwer me,
If theſe be Hours of Courtſhip.
Cre. Yes, they are;
For when the Gods deſtroy ſo faſt, 'tis time
We ſhould renew the Race.
Eur. What, in the midſt of Horror!
Cre. Why not then?
There's the more need of Comfort.
Eur. Impious *Creon*!
Cre. Unjuſt *Eurydice*! Can you accuſe me of Love,
Which is Heav'n's Precept, and not fear That

That Vengeance, which you say pursues our Crimes,
Should reach your Perjuries?

Eur. Still th' old Argument.
I bad you, cast your Eyes on other Men,
Now cast 'em on your self: Think what you are.

Cre. A Man.

Eur. A Man!

Cre. Why doubt you? I'm a Man.

Eur. 'Tis well you tell me so, I shou'd mistake you
For any other Part o' th' whole Creation,
Rather than think you Man. Hence from my Sight,
Thou Poison to my Eyes. [thinks,

Cre. 'Twas you first poison'd mine; and yet, me-
My Face and Person should not make you sport.

Eur. You force me, by your Importunities,
To shew you what you are.

Cre. A Prince, who loves you;
And since your Pride provokes me, worth your Love,
Ev'n at its highest Value.

Eur. Love from thee!
Why Love renounc'd thee e'er thou saw'st the Light.
Nature her self start back when thou wert born;
And cry'd, the Work's not mine——
The Midwife stood aghast; and when she saw
Thy Mountain back, and thy distorted Legs,
Thy Face it self,
Half-minted with the Royal Stamp of Man;
And half o'ercome with Beast, stood doubting long,
Whose Right in thee were more;
And knew not, if to burn thee in the Flames,
Were not the holier Work.

Cre. Am I to blame, if Nature threw my Body
In so perverse a Mould? Yet when she cast
Her envious Hand upon my supple Joints,
Unable to resist, and rumpled 'em
In heaps in their dark Lodging, to revenge
Her bungled Work, she stampt my Mind more fair;
And as from *Chaos*, huddled and deform'd,
The God strook Fire, and lighted up the Lamps
That beautify the Sky, so he inform'd This

This ill-shap'd Body with a daring Soul;
And making less than Man, he made me more.
Eur. No; thou art all one Error, Soul and Body.
The first young Tryal of some unskill'd Pow'r;
Rude in the making Art, and Ape of *Jove*.
The crooked Mind within hunch'd out thy Back,
And wander'd in thy Limbs. To thy own Kind
Make Love, if thou can'st find it in the World;
And seek not from our Sex to raise an Off-spring,
Which, mingled with the rest, would tempt the Gods
To cut off human Kind.
Cre. No; let 'em leave
The *Argian* Prince for you: That Enemy
Of *Thebes* has made you false, and break the Vows
You made to me.
Eur. They were my Mother's Vows,
Made when I was at Nurse.
Cre. But hear me, Maid;
This Blot of Nature, this deform'd, loath'd *Creon*,
Is Master of a Sword, to reach the Blood
Of your young *Minion*, spoil the Gods fine Work,
And stab you in his Heart.
Eur. This when thou dost,
Then may'st thou still be curs'd with loving me.
And, as thou Art, be still unpitied, loath'd;
And let his Ghost------ No, let his Ghost have rest;
But let the greatest, fiercest, foulest Fury,
Let *Creon* haunt himself. [*Exit* Eur.
Cre. 'Tis true, I am
What she has told me, an Offence to Sight.
My Body opens inward to my Soul,
And lets in Day to make my Vices seen
By all discerning Eyes, but the blind Vulgar.
I must make haste 'ere *OEdipus* return,
To snatch the Crown and her; for I still Love;
But Love with Malice; as an angry Cur
Snarls while he Feeds, so I seize and stanch
The hunger of my Love on this proud Beauty,
And leave the Scraps for Slaves.

Enter

Enter Tireſias, *leaning on a Staff, led by his Daughter* Manto.

What makes this blind prophetick Fool abroad!
Wou'd his *Apollo* had him, he's too holy
For Earth and me; I'll ſhun his Walk, and ſeek
My popular Friends [*Exit* Creon.

Tire. A little farther; yet a little farther,
Thou wretched Daughter of a dark old Man,
Conduct my weary Steps; and thou who ſeeſt
For me and for thy ſelf, beware thou tread not
With impious Steps upon dead Corps;----Now ſtay.
Methinks I draw more open, vital Air, where are we?

Man. Under Covert of a Wall;
The moſt frequented once, and noiſy Part
Of *Thebes*, now midnight Silence reigns ev'n here,
And Graſs untrodden ſprings beneath our Feet.

Tir. If there be nigh this Place a ſunny Bank,
There let me reſt a while. A ſunny Bank!
Alas! how can it be, where no Sun ſhines!
But a dim winking Taper in the Skies,
That nods, and ſcarce holds up his drowzy Head
To glimmer through the Damps. [*A Noiſe within, Follow, follow, follow, A* Creon, *A* Creon, *A* Creon.]
Hark! a tumultuous Noiſe, and *Creon*'s Name
Thrice eccho'd.

Man. Fly, the Tempeſt drives this way.

Tir. Whither can Age and Blindneſs take their flight?
If I could fly, what cou'd I ſuffer worſe,
Secure of greater Ills! [*Noiſe again*, Creon, Creon, *&c.*

Enter Creon, Diocles, Alcander, Pyracmon, *followed by the Crowd.*

Creon. I thank ye, Countrymen; but muſt refuſe
The Honours you intend me; they're too great;
And I am too unworthy; think agen,
And make a better Choice.

1 *Cit.* Think twice! I ne'er thought twice in all my Life; that's double work.

2 *Cit.* My firſt Word is always my ſecond; and therefore I'll have no ſecond Word: And therefore once again, I ſay, A *Creon.*

All. A *Creon*, A *Creon*, A *Creon!*

Cre. Yet hear me, Fellow-Citizens.

Dioc. Fellow-Citizens! there was a Word of Kindneſs!

Alc. When did *OEdipus* ſalute you by that familiar Name?

1 *Cit.* Never, never; he was too proud.

Cre. Indeed he could not, for he was a Stranger:
But under him our *Thebes* is half deſtroy'd.
Forbid it Heav'n the reſidue ſhould periſh
Under a *Theban* born.
'Tis true, the Gods might ſend this Plague among you,
Becauſe a Stranger rul'd: But what of that,
Can I redreſs it now?

3 *Cit.* Yes, you or none.
'Tis certain that the Gods are angry with us,
Becauſe he Reigns.

Cre. *OEdipus* may return: You may be ruin'd.

1 *Cit.* Nay, if that be the matter, we are ruin'd already.

2 *Cit.* Half of us that are here preſent, were living Men but Yeſterday, and we that are abſent do but drop and drop, and no Man knows whether he be dead or living. And therefore while we are ſound and well, let us ſatisfy our Conſciences, and make a new King.

3 *Cit.* Ha, if we were but worthy to ſee another Coronation, and then if we muſt die, we'll go merrily together.

All. To the Queſtion, to the Queſtion.

Dioc. Are you content, *Creon* ſhould be your King?

All. A *Creon*, A *Creon*, A *Creon!*

Tir. Hear me, ye *Thebans*, and thou *Creon*, hear me.

1 *Cit.* Who's that would be heard? We'll hear No Man: We can ſcarce hear one another.

Tir. I charge you by the Gods to hear me.

2 *Cit.* Oh, 'tis *Apollo*'s Prieſt, we muſt hear him:
'Tis the old blind Prophet that ſees all Things.

3 *Cit.* He comes from the Gods too, and they are our Betters, and in good Manners we muſt hear him; ſpeak, Prophet.

2 *Cit.* For coming from the Gods, that's no great Matter, they can all ſay that; but he's a great Scholar, he can make Almanacks, and he were put to't,

Tir.

Tir. When ang'ry Heav'n ſcatters its Plagues among you,
Is it for nought, ye *Thebans!* Are the Gods
Unjuſt in puniſhing? Are there no Crimes
Which pull this Vengeance down?

1 *Cit.* Yes, yes, no doubt there are ſome Sins ſtirring, that are the Cauſe of all.

3 *Cit.* Yes there are Sins; or we ſhould have no Taxes.

2 *Cit.* For my part, I can ſpeak it with a ſafe Conſcience, I ne'er ſinn'd in all my Life.

1 *Cit.* Nor I.

3 *Cit.* Nor I.

2 *Cit.* Then we are all juſtify'd, the Sin lies not at our Doors.

Tir. All juſtify'd alike, and yet all guilty;
Were every Man's falſe dealing brought to light,
His Envy, Malice, Lying, Perjuries,
His Weights and Meaſures, th'other Man's Extortions,
With what Face could you tell offended Heav'n
You have not ſinn'd?

2 *Cit.* Nay, if theſe be Sins, the Caſe is alter'd; for my part I never thought any Thing but Murder had been a Sin.

Tir. And yet, as if all theſe were leſs than nothing;
You add Rebellion to 'em; impious *Thebans!*
Have you not ſworn before the Gods to ſerve
And to obey this *OEdipus*, your King
By publick Voice elected? anſwer me, if this be true!

2 *Cit.* This is true; but it's a hard World, Neighbours,
If a Man's Oath muſt be his Maſter.

Cre. Speak *Diocles*; all goes wrong.

Dioc. How are you Traytors, Countrymen of *Thebes?*
This holy Sire, who preſſes you with Oaths,
Forgets your firſt; were you not ſworn before
To *Lajus* and his Blood?

All. We were; we were.

Dioc. While *Lajus* has a lawful Succeſſor,
Your firſt Oath ſtill muſt bind: *Eurydice*
Is Heir to *Lajus*; let her marry *Creon*:
Offended Heav'n will never be appeas'd
While *OEdipus* pollutes the Throne of *Lajus*,
A Stranger to his Blood.

All. We'll no *OEdipus*, no *OEdipus*.

1 *Cit.* He puts the Prophet in a Mouſe-hole.

2 *Cit.* I knew it wou'd be ſo; the laſt Man ever ſpeaks the beſt Reaſon.

Tir. Can Benefits thus die ungrateful *Thebans!*
Remember yet, when, after *Lajus*'s Death,
The Monſter *Sphinx* laid your rich Country waſte,
Your Vineyards ſpoil'd, your labouring Oxen ſlew;
Your ſelves for fear mew'd up within your Walls,
She, taller than your Gates, o'er-look'd your Town;
But when ſhe rais'd her Bulk to ſail above you,
She drove the Air around her like a Wirlwind,
And ſhaded all beneath; 'till ſtooping down,
She clap'd her leathean Wings againſt yours Tow'rs,
And thruſt out her long Neck, ev'n to your Doors.

Dioc. Alc. Pyr. We'll hear no more.

Tir. You durſt not meet in Temples
T'invoke the Gods for aid, the proudeſt he
Who leads you now, then cowr'd, like a dar'd Lark:
This *Creon* ſhook for fear,
The Blood of *Lajus* cruddled in his Veins,
'Till *OEdipus* arriv'd.
Call'd by his own high Courage and the Gods,
Himſelf to you a God: ye offer'd him
Your Queen, and Crown; (but what was then your Crown!)
And Heav'n authoriz'd it by his Succeſs:
Speak then, who is your lawful King?

All. 'Tis *OEdipus*.

Tir. 'Tis *OEdipus* indeed: Your King more lawful
Than yet you dream: For ſomething ſtill there lies
In Heav'ns dark Volume, which I read through Miſts:
'Tis great, prodigious; 'tis a dreadful Birth,
Of wonderous Fate; and now, juſt now diſcloſing.
I ſee, I ſee! how terribly it dawns,
And my Soul ſickens with it.

1 *Cit.* How the God ſhakes him! [Triumph!

Tir. He comes! he comes! Victory Conqueſt!
But oh! Guiltleſs and Guilty: Murder! Parricide!
Inceſt! Diſcovery! Puniſhment——'tis ended,
And all your Sufferings o'er. *A Trum-*

A Trumpet within; *Enter* Hæmon.

Ham. Rouze up ye *Thebans*; tune your *Io Paans*!
Your King returns; the *Argians* are o'er-come;
Their Warlike Prince in ſingle Combate taken,
And led in Bands by God-like *OEdipus*.

All. OEdipus, OEdipus, OEdipus!

Creon. Furies confound his Fortune!---- [*Aſide.*
Haſte, all haſte: [*To them.*
And meet with Bleſſings our Victorious King;
Decree Proceſſions; bid new Holy-Days;
Crown all the Statues of our Gods with Garlands;
And raiſe a Brazen Column, thus inſcrib'd,
To *OEdipus*, now twice a Conqueror; Deliverer of his.
Truſt me, I weep for joy to ſee this Day. [*Thebes.*

Tir. Yes, Heav'n knows why thou weep'ſt:---Go,
And, as you uſe to ſupplicate your Gods-[Countrymen.
So meet your King with Bayes, and Olive-Branches:
Bow down, and touch his Knees, and beg from him
An end of all your Woes; for only he
Can give it you. [*Ex.* Tireſias *the People following.*

Enter OEdipus *in Triumph*; Adraſtus *Priſoner*; Dymas

Cre. All hail, great *OEdipus*; [*Train.*
Thou mighty Conqueror, hail; welcome to *Thebes*:
To thy own *Thebes*; to all that's left of *Thebes*:
For half thy Citizens are ſwept away, and wanting
To thy Triumph: And we, the happy Remnant,
Only live to welcome thee, and Die.

OEdip. Thus Pleaſure never comes ſincere to Man;
But lent by Heav'n upon hard Uſury;
And, while *Jove* holds us out the Bowl of Joy,
'Ere it can reach our Lips it's daſht with Gall
By ſome left-handed God. O mournful Triumph!
O Conqueſt gain'd abroad and loſt at home!
O *Argos!* now rejoyce, for *Thebes* lies low!
Thy ſlaughter'd Sons now ſmile, and think they won;
When they can count more *Theban* Ghoſts than theirs.

Adr. No; *Argos* mourns with *Thebes*; you temper'd ſo
Your Courage while you fought, that mercy ſeem'd
The manlier Virtue, and much more prevail'd.
While *Argos* is a People, think your *Thebes*

Can never want for Subjects. Every Nation
Will crowd to serve where *OEdipus* commands. [tor!
Cre. to Hem. How mean it shews to fawn upon the Vic-
Hem. Had you beheld him fight, you had said other-
Come 'tis brave bearing in him not to envy [wise;
Superiour Virtue.
OEdip. This indeed is Conquest,
To gain a Friend like you; why were we Foes?
Adr. 'Cause we were Kings, and each disdain'd an
I fought to have it in my pow'r to do [Equal.
What thou hast done; and so to use my Conquest;
To shew thee, Honour was my only Motive.
Know this, that were my Army at thy Gates,
And *Thebes* thus waste, I would not take the Gift,
Which, like a Toy dropt from the Hands of Fortune,
Lay for the next Chance-comer.
OEdip. embracing. No more Captive,
But Brother of the War. 'Tis much more pleasant,
And safer, trust me, thus to meet thy Love,
Than when hard Gantlets clench'd our Warlike
And kept 'em from soft use. [Hands,
Adr. My Conqueror! [alive.
OEdip. My Friend! that other Name keeps Enmity
But longer to detain thee were a Crime; [alive.
To Love, and to *Euridyce*, go free.
Such welcome as a ruin'd Town can give,
Expect from me; the rest let her supply.
Adr. I go without a Blush, though conquer'd twice,
By you and by my Princess. [*Ex.* Adrastus.
Cre. [*Aside.*] Then I am conquer'd thrice; by *OEdipus*,
And her, and ev'n by him, the Slave of both.
Gods, I'm beholden to you, for making me your Image,
Wou'd I cou'd make you mine. [*Ex.* Creon.
Enter the People with Branches in their Hands, holding them up, and kneeling: Two Priests before them.
OEdip. Alas, my People!
What means this speechless Sorrow, down-cast Eyes,
And lifted Hands! if there be one among you
Whom Grief has left a Tongue, speak for the rest.
1 *Pr.* O Father of thy Country!

As to a visible Divinity. [sinefs of Mankind;
A Prince on whom Heav'n safely might repose the Bu-
For Providence might on thy careful Bosom sleep se-
And leave her Task to thee. [cure,
But where's the Glory of thy former Acts?
Ev'n that's destroy'd when none shall live to speak it.
Millions of Subjects shalt thou have; but mute.
A People of the dead; a crowded Desart.
A Midnight Silence at the noon of Day. [Pity,

OEdip. O were our Gods as ready with their
As I with mine, this Presence shou'd be throng'd
With all I left alive; and my sad Eyes
Not search in vain for Friends, whose promis'd Sight
Flatter'd my toils of War.

1 *Pr.* Twice our Deliverer. [sleeps.

OEdip. Nor are now your Vows addrest to one who
When this unwelcome News first reach'd my Ears,
Dymas was sent to *Delphos* to enquire
The Cause and Cure of this contagious Ill,
And is this Day return'd; but since his Message
Concerns the Publick, I refus'd to hear it
But in this general Presence; let him speak.

Dym. A dreadful Answer from the hollow'd Urn,
And sacred *Tripous* did the Priestest give,
In these mysterious Words,

The Oracle. *Shed in a curfed Hour, by curfed Hand,*
Blood-Royal unreveng'd, has curs'd the Land.
When Lajus *Death is expiated well,*
Your Plague shall ceafe: the reft let Lajus *tell.*

OEdip. Dreadful indeed! Blood, and a King's Blood
And such a King's, and by his Subjects shed; [too;
(Else why this curse on *Thebes?*) no wonder then
If Monsters, Wars, and Plagues revenge such Crimes!
If Heav'n be just, its whole Artillery
All must be empty'd on us; Not one Bolt
Shall err from *Thebes*; but more be call'd for, more;
New moulded Thunder of a larger Size;
Driv'n by whole *Jove*. What, touch anointed Pow'r!
Then Gods beware; *Jove* wou'd himself be next,
Cou'd you but reach him too.

2 *Pr.*

2 *Pr.* We mourn the ſad Remembrance.

OEdip. Well you may:
Worſe than a Plague infects you; y'are devoted
To Mother Earth, and to th' infernal Pow'rs;
Hell has a right in you; I thank you Gods,
That I'm no *Theban* born; how my Blood cruddles!
As if this Curſe touch'd me! and touch'd me nearer
Than all this Preſence!-- Yes, 'tis a good King's Blood,
And I, a King, am ty'd in deeper Bonds
To expiate this Blood; But where, from whom,
Or how muſt I attone it? tell me, *Thebans*,
How *Lajus* fell? for a confus'd Report
Paſs'd through my Ears, when firſt I took the Crown;
But full of Hurry, like a Morning Dream,
It vaniſh'd in the Buſineſs of the Day:

1 *Pr.* He went in private forth; but thinly fol-
And ne'er return'd to *Thebes*. [low'd;

OEdip. Nor any from him? Came there no At-
None to bring the News? [tendant?

2 *Pr.* But one; and he ſo wounded,
He ſcarce drew Breath to ſpeak ſome few faint Words.

OEdip. What were they? ſomething may be learnt from thence.

1 *Pr.* He ſaid a band of Robbers watch'd their Paſ-
Who took advantage of a narrow Way [ſage;
To murder *Lajus* and the reſt; himſelf
Left too for dead.

OEdip. Made you no more Enquiry,
But took this bare Relation?

2 *Pr.* 'Twas neglected:
For then the Monſter *Sphinx* began to rage;
And preſent Cares ſoon buried the remote;
So was it huſh'd, and never ſince reviv'd.

OEdip. Mark, *Thebans* mark!
Juſt then, the *Sphinx* began to rage among you;
The Gods took hold ev'n of th' offending Minute,
And dated thence your Woes; thence will I trace 'em.

1 *Pr.* 'Tis juſt thou ſhould'ſt. [it:

OEdip. Hear then this dreadful Imprecation; hear
'Tis lay'd on all; not any one exempt: Bear

Bear witneſs Heav'n, avenge it on the perjur'd.
If any *Theban* born, if any Stranger
Reveal this Murder, or produce its Author,
Ten attique Talents be his juſt Reward;
But, if for Fear, for Favour, or for Hire,
The Murder'r he conceal, the Curſe of *Thebes*
Fall heavy on his Head; Unite our Plagues,
Ye Gods, and place 'em there; from Fire and Water,
Converſe, and all Things common be he baniſh'd.
But for the Murderer's ſelf, unfound by Man,
Find him ye Pow'rs Cœleſtial and Infernal;
And the ſame Fate, or worſe than *Lajus* met,
Let be his Lot; his Children be accurſt;
His Wife and Kindred, all of his be curs'd.

Both Pr. Confirm it Heav'n!

Enter Jocaſta, *attended by Women.*

Joc. At your Devotions! Heav'n ſucceed your Wiſhes;
And bring th' effect of theſe your pious Pray'rs
On you, and me, and all.

Pr. Avert this Omen, Heav'n!

OEdip. O fatal Sound, unfortunate *Jocaſta!*
What haſt thou ſaid! An ill Hour haſt thou choſen
For theſe fore-boding Words! Why, we were curſing!

Joc. Then may that Curſe fall only where you laid it.

OEdip. Speak no more!
For all thou ſay'ſt is ominous: We were curſing;
And that dire Imprecation haſt thou faſten'd
On *Thebes*, and thee and me, and all of us.

Joc. Are then my Bleſſings turn'd into a Curſe?
O Unkind *OEdipus.* My former Lord
Thought me his Bleſſing: Be thou like my *Lajus.*

OEdip. What yet again! The Third Time haſt thou [curs'd me?
This Imprecation was for *Lajus* Death,
And thou haſt wiſh'd me like him.

Joc. Horror ſeizes me!

OEdip. Why doſt thou gaze upon me? Prithee Love
Take off thy Eyes; it burthens me too much.

Joc. The more I look, the more I find of *Lajus:*
His Speech, his Garb, his Action; nay, his Frown;
(For I have ſeen it;) but ne'er bent on me. *OEd.*

OEdip. Are we so like?

Joc. In all Things but his Love. [speak how well.

OEdip. I love thee more: So well I love, Words cannot
No pious Son e'er loy'd his Mother more
Than I my dear *Jocasta.* [you chid,

Joc. I love you too the self same way: And when
Methought a Mother's Love start up in your Defence,
And bad me not be angry; be not you;
For I love *Lajus* still as Wives shou'd love:
But you more tenderly; as part of me;
And when I have you in my Arms, methinks I lull my

OEdip. Then we are blest; [Child asleep.
And all these Curses sweep along the Skies
Like empty Clouds; but drop not on our Heads.

Joc. I have not joy'd an Hour since you departed,
For publick Miseries, and for private Fears;
But this blest Meeting has o'er-paid 'em all.
Good Fortune that comes seldom comes more wel-
All I can wish for now, is your Consent [come.
To make my Brother happy.

OEdip. How, *Jocasta?*

Joc. By Marriage with his Niece, *Eurydice!*

OEdip. Uncle and Niece! They are too near my Love;
'Tis too like Incest: 'Tis Offence to Kind!
Had I not promis'd, were there no *Adrastus,*
No Choice but *Creon* left her of Mankind,
They shou'd not marry; speak no more of it;
The Thought disturbs me.

Joc. Heav'n can never bless a Vow so broken,
Which I made to *Creon*; remember he's my Brother.

OEdip. That's the Bar; and she thy Daughter.
Nature wou'd abhor to be forc'd back again upon herself.
And like a Whirl-pool swallow her own Streams.

Joc. Be not displeas'd, I'll move the Suit no more.

OEdip. No, do not; for, I know not why, it shakes me
When I but think on Incest; move we forward
To thank the Gods for my Success, and pray
To wash the Guilt of Royal Blood away. *Ex. omnes.*

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

SCENE *An open Gallery. A Royal Bed-Chamber, being ſuppos'd behind.*

The Time, Night. Thunder, &c.

Enter Hæmon, Alcander *and* Pyracmon.

Hæmon.

SURE, 'tis the End of all Things! Fate has torn
The Lock of Time off, and his Head is now
The ghaſtly Ball of round Eternity!
Call you theſe Peals of Thunder, but the Yawn
Of bellowing Clouds? By *Jove*, they ſeem to me
The Worlds laſt Groans; and thoſe vaſt Sheets of Flame
Are its laſt Blaze! The Tapers of the Gods,
The Sun and Moon, run down like waxen-Globes;
The ſhooting Stars, end all in purple Gellies,
And *Chaos* is at Hand.

Pyr. 'Tis Midnight, yet there's not a *Theban* ſleeps,
But ſuch as ne'er muſt wake. All crowd about
The Palace, and implore, as from a God,
Help of the King; who, from the Battlement,
By the red Light'ning's glare, deſcry'd afar,
Atones the angry Powers. [*Thunder*, &c.

Hæm. Ha! *Pyracmon*, look;
Behold, *Alcander*, from yon' Weſt of Heav'n,
The perfect Figures of a Man and Woman:
A Scepter bright with Gems in each right Hand,
Their flowing Robes of dazling Purple made,
Diſtinctly yonder in that point they ſtand,
Juſt Weſt; a bloody red ſtains all the Place:
And ſee, their Faces are quite hid in Clouds.

Pyr. Cluſters of Golden Stars hang o'er their Heads,
And ſeem ſo crouded, that they burſt upon 'em:
All dart at once their baleful Influence
In leaking Fire.

Alc. Long-bearded Comets flash

Like flaming Porcupines, to their left Sides,
As they would ſhoot their Quills into their Hearts.
Ham. But ſee! the King, and Queen, and all the Court!
Did ever Day or Night ſhew out like this? [Thunder!
[*Thunders again. The Scene draws, and diſcovers the Prodigies.*
Enter OEdipus, Jocaſta, Eurydice, Adraſtus, *and all coming forward with Amazement.* [Noiſe,
Oedip. Anſwer, you Pow'rs Divine; ſpare all this
This rack of Heav'n, and ſpeak your fatal Pleaſure.
Why breaks yon dark and dusky Orb away?
Why from the bleeding Womb of monſt'rous Night,
Burſt forth ſuch Myriads of abortive Stars?
Ha! my *Jocaſta*, look! the Silver Moon!
A ſetling Crimſon ſtains her beauteous Face!
She's all o'er Blood! and look, behold again,
What mean the myſtick Heav'ns, ſhe journeys on?
A vaſt Eclipſe darkens the labouring Planet.
Sound there, ſound all our Inſtruments of War;
Clarions and Trumpets, Silver, Braſs, and Iron,
And beat a thouſand Drums to help her Labour.
Adr. 'Tis vain; you ſee the Prodigies continue;
Let's gaze no more, the Gods are humorous.
OEdip. Forbear, raſh Man---- Once more I ask your Pleaſure!
If that the Glow-worm light of human Reaſon
Might dare to offer at immortal Knowledge,
And cope with Gods, why all this Storm of Nature?
Why do the Rocks ſplit, and why rouls the Sea?
Why thoſe Portents in Heav'n, and Plagues on Earth?
Why yon' Gigantick Forms, Ethereal Monſters?
Alas! is all this but to fright the Dwarfs
Which your own Hands have made? Then be it ſo.
Or if the Fates reſolve ſome Expiation
For murder'd *Lajus*; hear me, hear me, Gods!
Hear me thus proſtrate. Spare this groaning Land,
Save innocent *Thebes*, ſtop the Tyrant Death;
Do this, and lo I ſtand up an Oblation
To meet your ſwifteſt and ſevereſt Anger,
Dart all at once, and ſtrike me to the Center. *The*

The Cloud draws that veil'd the Heads of the Figures in the Sky, and shews 'em Crown'd, with the Names of OEdipus and Jocasta written above in great Characters of Gold.

Adr. Either I dream, and all my cooler Senses
Are vanish'd with that Cloud that fleets away;
Or just above those two Majestick Heads,
I see, I read distinctly in large Gold,
OEdipus and *Jocasta*.

Alc. I read the same.

Adr. 'Tis wonderful; yet ought not Man to wade
Too far in the vast deep of Destiny.

[Thunder; and the Prodigies vanish.

Joc. My Lord, my *OEdipus*, why gaze you now,
When the whole Heav'n is clear, as if the Gods
Had some new Monsters made? Will you not turn,
And bless your People; who devour each Word
You breathe?

OEdip. It shall be so.
Yes, I will die, O *Thebes*, to save thee!
Draw from my Heart my Blood, with more content
Than e'er I wore thy Crown. Yet, O *Jocasta!*
By all the Indearments of miraculous Love,
By all our Languishings, our Fears in Pleasure,
Which oft have made us wonder; here I swear
On thy fair Hand, upon thy Breast I swear,
I cannot call to mind, from budding Childhood
To blooming Youth, a Crime by me committed,
For which the awful Gods should doom my Death.

Joc. 'Tis not you, my Lord,
But he who murder'd *Lajus*, frees the Land:
Were you, which is impossible, the Man,
Perhaps my Poniard first should drink your Blood;
But you are innocent, as your *Jocasta*,
From Crimes like those. This made me violent
To save your Life, which you unjust would lose:
Nor can you comprehend, with deepest Thought,
The horrid Agony you cast me in,
When you resolv'd to die.

OEdip. Is't possible?

Joc. Alas! why ſtart you ſo? Her ſtiff'ning Grief,
Who ſaw her Children ſlaughter'd all at once,
Was dull to mine: Methinks I ſhould have made
My Boſom bare againſt the armed God,
To ſave my *OEdipus!*

OEdip. I pray, no more.

Joc. You've ſilenc'd me, my Lord.

OEdip. Pardon me, dear *Jocaſta*;
Pardon a Heart that ſinks with Sufferings,
And can but vent it ſelf in Sobs and Murmurs;
Yet to reſtore my Peace, I'll find him out.
Yes, yes, you Gods! you ſhall have ample Vengeance
On *Lajus* Murderer. O, the Traytor's Name!
I'll know't, I will; Art ſhall be conjur'd for it,
And Nature all unravel'd.

Joc. Sacred Sir —— [ſetch him,

OEdip. Rage will have way, and 'tis but juſt; I'll
Tho' lodg'd in Air, upon a Dragon's Wing,
Tho' Rocks ſhould hide him; nay, he ſhall be dragg'd
From Hell, if Charms can hurry him along:
His Ghoſt ſhall be, by ſage *Tireſias* Pow'r,
(*Tireſias*, that Rules all beneath the Moon)
Confin'd to Fleſh, to ſuffer Death once more,
And then be plung'd in his firſt Fires again.

Enter Creon.

Cre. My Lord,
Tireſias attends your Pleaſure.

OEdip. Haſte, and bring him in.
O, my *Jocaſta*, *Eurydice*, *Adraſtus*,
Creon, and all ye *Thebans*, now the End
Of Plagues, of Madneſs, Murders, Prodigies,
Draws on; this Battel of the Heav'ns and Earth
Shall by his Wiſdom be reduc'd to Peace.

Enter Tireſias, *leaning on a Staff, led by his Daughter* Manto, *follow'd by other* Thebans.

O thou, whoſe moſt aſpiring Mind
Knows all the Buſineſs of the Courts above,
Opens the Cloſets of the Gods, and dares
To mix with *Jove* himſelf and Fate at Council;
O Prophet, anſwer me, declare aloud The

The Traytor who conſpir'd the Death of *Lajus*:
Or be they more, who from malignant Stars
Have drawn this Plague that blaſts unhappy *Thebes*?
Tir. We muſt no more than Fate commiſſions us
To tell; yet ſomething, and of moment, I'll unfold,
If that the God would wake; I feel him now,
Like a ſtrong Spirit charm'd into a Tree,
That leaps, and moves the Wood without a Wind.
The rouzed God, as all this while he lay
Intomb'd alive, ſtarts and dilates himſelf;
He ſtruggles, and he tears my aged Trunk [Skin;
With holy Fury, my old Arteries burſt, my rivel'd
Like Parchment, crackles at the hallow'd Fire;
I ſhall be young again: *Manto*, my Daughter,
Thou haſt a Voice that might have ſav'd the Bard
Of *Thrace*, and forc'd the raging Bacchanals,
With lifted Prongs, to liſten to thy Airs:
O Charm this God, this Fury in my Boſom,
Lull him with tuneful Notes, and artful Strings,
With pow'rful Strains; *Manto*, my lovely Child,
Sooth the unruly God-head to be mild.

SONG to *APOLLO*.

PHœbus, *God belov'd by Men*;
At thy dawn, every Beaſt is rouzed in his Den;
At thy ſetting, all the Birds of thy Abſence complain,
And we die, all die 'till the Morning comes again.
Phœbus, *God belov'd by Men!*
Idol of the Eaſtern Kings,
Awful as the God who flings
His Thunder round, and th' Light'ning wings;
God of Songs, and Orphean *Strings*,
Who to this mortal Boſom brings,
All harmonious heav'nly Things!
Thy drouzy Prophet to revive,
Ten thouſand thouſand Forms before him drive:
With Chariots and Horſes all o' fire awake him,
Convulſions, and Furies, and Propheſies ſhake him:
Let him tell it in Groans, tho' he bend with the Load,
Tho' he burſt with the Weight of the terrible God. *Tir.*

Tir. The Wretch who shed the Blood of Old *Lab-*
Lives, and is Great; [*dacides*,
But cruel Greatness ne'er was long.
The first of *Lajus* Blood his Life did seize,
And urg'd his Fate,
Which else had lasting been and strong.
The Wretch, who *Lajus* kill'd, must bleed or fly;
Or *Thebes*, consum'd with Plagues, in Ruins lie.

OEdip. The first of *Lajus* Blood! pronounce the Per-
May the God roar from thy prophetick Mouth, [son;
That even the Dead may start up, to behold.
Name him, I say, that most accursed Wretch,
For by the Stars he dies. Speak, I command thee.
By *Phœbus*, speak; for sudden Death's his Doom.
Here shall he fall, bleed on this very Spot.
His Name, I charge thee once more, speak.

Tir. 'Tis lost,
Like what we think can never shun Remembrance;
Yet of a sudden's gone beyond the Clouds. [it be.

OEdip. Fetch it from thence; I'll have't where-e'er

Cre. Let me intreat you, sacred Sir, be calm,
And *Creon* shall point out the great Offender.
'Tis true, respect of Nature might injoin
Me Silence at another Time; but, oh,
Much more the Pow'r of my eternal Love! [try----
That, that should strike me dumb. Yet *Thebes* my Coun-
I'll break through all, to succour thee, poor City!
O, I must speak.

OEdip. Speak then, if ought thou know'st;
As much thou seem'st to know, delay no longer.

Cre. O Beauty! O illustrious Royal Maid!
To whom my Vows were ever paid 'till now;
And with such modest, chaste and pure Affection,
The coldest Nymph might read 'em without blushing;
Art thou the Murd'ress then of wretched *Lajus*?
And I, must I accuse thee! O my Tears!
Why will you fall in so abhor'd a Cause?
But that thy beauteous, barbarous Hand destroy'd
Thy Father (O monst'rous Act!) both Gods
And Men at once take notice.

OEdip.

OEdip. Eurydice!

Eur. Traytor, go on; I ſcorn thy little Malice,
And knowing more my perfect Innocence,
Than Gods and Men, then how much more than thee,
Who art their oppoſite, and form'd a Lyar,
I thus diſdain thee! Thou once didſt talk of Love;
Becauſe I hate thy Love, thou doſt accuſe me.

Adr. Villain, inglorious Villain,
And Traytor, doubly damn'd, who dur'ſt blaſpheme
The ſpotleſs Vertue of the brighteſt Beauty;
Thou dy'ſt: Nor ſhall the ſacred Majeſty,
[*Draws and wounds him.*
That guards this Place, preſerve thee from my Rage.

OEdip. Diſarm 'em both: Prince, I ſhall make you know
That I can tame you twice. Guards ſeize him.

Adr. Sir, I muſt acknowledge in another Cauſe
Repentance might abaſh me; but I glory
In this, and ſmile to ſee the Traytor's Blood.

OEdip. Creon, you ſhall be ſatisfy'd at full.

Cre. My Hurt is nothing, Sir; but I appeal
To wiſe *Tireſias*, if my Accuſation
Be not moſt true. The firſt of *Lajus* Blood
Gave him his Death. Is there a Prince before her?
Then ſhe is Faultleſs, and I ask her Pardon.
And may this Blood ne'er ceaſe to drop, O *Thebes*,
If Pity of thy Sufferings did not move me
To ſhew the Cure which Heav'n it ſelf preſcrib'd.

Eur. Yes, *Thebans*, I will die to ſave your Lives,
More willingly than you can wiſh my Fate;
But let this good, this wiſe, this holy Man,
Pronounce my Sentence: For to fall by him,
By the vile Breath of that prodigious Villain,
Would ſink my Soul, tho' I ſhould die a Martyr.

Adr. Unhand me, Slaves. O mightieſt of Kings,
See at your Feet a Prince not us'd to kneel;
Touch not *Eurydice*, by all the Gods,
As you would ſave your *Thebes*, but take my Life:
For ſhould ſhe periſh Heav'n would heap Plagues on Plagues,
Rain Sulphur down, hurl kindled Bolts
Upon your guilty Heads.

Cre. You turn to Gallantry, what is but Juſtice;
Proof will be eaſy made. *Adraſtus* was
The Robber who bereft th' unhappy King
Of Life; becauſe he flatly had deny'd
To make ſo poor a Prince his Son-in-Law;
Therefore 'twere fit that both ſhould periſh:

1 *Theb.* Both, let both die.

All Theb. Both, both; let 'em die. [here,

OEdip. Hence, you wild Herd! For your Ring-leader
He ſhall be made Example. *Hæmon*, take him.

1 *Theb.* Mercy, O Mercy.

OEdip. Mutiny in my Preſence!
Hence, let me ſee that buſy Face no more. [Rage!

Tir. Thebans, what Madneſs makes you drunk with
Enough of guilty Death's already acted:
Fierce *Creon* has accus'd *Eurydice*,
With Prince *Adraſtus*; which the God reproves
By inward Checks, and leaves their Fates in doubt.

OEdip. Therefore inſtruct us what remains to do,
Or ſuffer; for I feel a Sleep like Death
Upon me, and I ſigh to be at reſt.

Tir. Since that the Pow'rs Divine refuſe to clear
The myſtick Deed, I'll to the Grove of Furies;
There I can force th' infernal Gods to ſhew
Their horrid Forms; each trembling Ghoſt ſhall riſe,
And leave their grizly King without a Waiter.
For Prince *Adraſtus* and *Eurydice*,
My Life's engag'd, I'll guard 'em in the Fane,
'Till the dark Myſteries of Hell are done.
Follow me, Princes; *Thebans*, all to reſt.
O, *OEdipus*, to morrow---- but no more.
If that thy wakeful Genius will permit,
Indulge thy Brain this Night with ſoſter Slumbers.
To Morrow, O to Morrow!---- ſleep, my Son;
And in prophetick Dreams thy Fate be ſhown.
[*Ex.* Tir. Adr. Eur. Man. *and* Theb.

Manent OEdipus, Jocaſta, Creon, Pyracmon, Hæmon, *and* Alcander.

OEdip. To Bed, my Fair, my Dear, my beſt *Jocaſta*.
After the Toils of War, 'tis wond'rous ſtrange Our

Our Loves ſhould thus be daſh'd. One moments,
And I'll approach the Arms of my belov'd. [Thought
Joc. Conſume whole Years in Care, ſo now and then
I may have leave to feed my famiſh'd Eyes
With one ſhort paſſing Glance, and ſigh my Vows.
This, and no more, my Lord, is all the Paſſion
Of languiſhing *Jocaſta*. [*Exit.*
OEdip. Thou ſofteſt, ſweeteſt of the World! good Night.
Nay, ſhe is beauteous too; yet, mighty Love! [Night.
I never offer'd to obey thy Laws,
But an unuſual Chilneſs came upon me;
An unknown Hand ſtill check'd my forward Joy.
Daſh'd me with Bluſhes, tho' no Light was near;
That ev'n the Act became a Violation.
Pyr. He's ſtrangely Thoughtful. [call me?
OEdip. Hark! Who was that? Ha! *Creon*, did'ſt thou
Cre. Not I, my gracious Lord, nor any here.
OEdip. That's ſtrange! Methought I heard a doleful
Cry'd *OEdipus*—The Prophet bad me ſleep. [Voice
He talk'd of Dreams, and Viſions, and to morrow!
I'll muſe no more on't, come what will or can,
My Thoughts are clearer than unclouded Stars;
And with thoſe Thoughts I'll reſt. *Creon*, good Night.
[*Ex. with* Hæm.

Cre. Sleep ſeal your Eyes up, Sir, eternal Sleep.
But if he muſt ſleep and awake again, O all
Tormenting Dreams, wild Horrors of the Night,
And Hags of Fancy wing him through the Air.
From Precipices hurl him headlong down;
Charybdis roar, and Death be ſet before him.
Alc. Your Curſes have already tak'n effect;
For he looks very ſad.
Cre. May he be rooted, where he ſtands, for ever;
His Eye-balls never move, Brows be unbent;
His Blood, his Entrails, Liver, Heart and Bowels,
Be blacker than the Place I wiſh him, Hell.
Pyr. No more: You tear your ſelf, but vex not him.
Methinks 'twere brave this Night to force the Temple,
While blind *Tireſias* conjures up the Fiends,
And paſs the Time with nice *Eurydice*. *Alc.*

Alc. Try Promiſes, and Threats, and if all fail,
Since Hell's broke looſe, why ſhould not you be mad?
Raviſh, and leave her dead with her *Adraſtus*.

Cre. Were the Globe, mine I'd give a Province hourly
For ſuch another Thought. Luſt, and Revenge!
To ſtab at once the only Man I hate,
And to enjoy the Woman whom I love!
I ask no more of my auſpicious Stars,
The reſt as Fortune pleaſe; ſo but this Night
She play me fair, why, let her turn for ever.

Enter Hæmon.

Ham. My Lord, the troubled King is gone to reſt;
Yet, 'ere he ſlept, commanded me to clear
The Anti-Chambers; none muſt dare be near him.

Cre. *Hæmon*, you do your Duty; ---- [*Thunder.*
And we obey.---The Night grows yet more dreadful!
'Tis juſt that all retire to their Devotions;
The Gods are angry; but to Morrow's dawn,
If Prophets do not lie, will make all clear. [*As they go off.*

OEdipus *enters, walking aſleep in his Shirt, with a Dagger in his Right Hand, and a Taper in his Left.*

OEdip. O, my *Jocaſta!* 'tis for this the wet
Starv'd Soldier lies all Night on the cold Ground;
For this he bears the Storms
Of Winter Camps, and freezes in his Arms.
To be thus circled, to be thus embrac'd;
That I could hold thee ever!---Ha! where art thou?
What means this melancholy Light, that ſeems
The Gloom of glowing Embers?
The Curtain's drawn; and ſee, ſhe's here again!
Jocaſta? Ha! what, fallen aſleep ſo ſoon?
How fares my Love? This Taper will inform me.
Ha! Light'ning blaſt me, Thunder
Rivet me ever to *Prometheus* Rock,
And Vultures gnaw out my inceſtuous Heart.
By all the Gods! my Mother *Merope!*
My Sword, a Dagger; Ha, who waits there? Slaves,
My Sword; what, *Hæmon*, dar'ſt thou, Villain, ſtop me?
With thy own Ponyard periſh. Ha! who's this?
Or is't a change of Death? By all my Honours, New-

New Murder; thou haſt ſlain old *Polybus*.
Inceſt and Parricide, thy Father's murder'd!
Out thou infernal Flame. Now all is dark,
All blind and diſmal, moſt triumphant Miſchief!
And now while thus I ſtalk about the Room,
I challenge Fate to find another Wretch
Like *OEdipus*! [*Thunder*, &c.

Enter Jocaſta *attended, with Lights, in a Night-gown.*

OEdip. Night, Horror, Death, Confuſion, Hell, and
Where am I? O, *Jocaſta*, let me hold thee, [Furies!
Thus to my Boſom, Ages let me graſp thee.
All that the hardeſt temper'd weather'd Fleſh,
With fierceſt human Spirit inſpir'd, can dare
Or do, I dare; but oh, you Pow'rs, this was
By infinite degrees too much for Man.
Methinks my deafen'd Ears
Are burſt; my Eyes as if they had been knock'd
By ſome tempeſtuous Hand, ſhoot flaſhing Fire:
That Sleep ſhould do this!

Joc. Then my Fears were true.
Methought I heard your Voice, and yet I doubted,
Now roaring like the Ocean, when the Winds
Fight with the Waves; now, in a ſtill ſmall tone
Your dying Accents fell, as racking Ships,
After the dreadful Yell, ſink murmuring down,
And bubble up a Noiſe.

OEdip. Truſt me, thou Faireſt, beſt of all thy Kind,
None e'er in Dreams was tortur'd ſo before.
Yet what moſt ſhocks the niceneſs of my Temper,
Ev'n far beyond the killing of my Father,
And my own Death, is, that this horrid Sleep
Daſh'd my ſick Fancy with an Act of Inceſt.
I dreamt, *Jocaſta*, that thou wert my Mother;
Which, tho' impoſſible, ſo damps my Spirits,
That I cou'd do a Miſchief on my ſelf,
Leaſt I ſhould ſleep and dream the like again.

Joc. O, *OEdipus*, too well I underſtand you!
I know the Wrath of Heav'n, the Care of *Thebes*,
The Cries of its Inhabitants, War's Toils,
And thouſand other Labours of the State, Are

Are all referr'd to you, and ought to take you
For ever from *Jocasta*.
OEdip. Life of my Life, and Treasure of my Soul,
Heav'n knows I love thee.
Joc. O, you think me vile,
And of an Inclination so ignoble,
That I must hide me from your Eyes for ever.
Be witness, Gods, and strike *Jocasta* dead,
If an immodest Thought, or low Desire
Inflam'd my Breast, since first our Loves were lighted.
OEdip. O rise, and add not, by thy cruel Kindness,
A Grief more sensible than all my Torments.
Thou think'st my Dreams are forg'd; but by thy self,
The greatest Oath, I swear, they are most true.
But, be they what they will, I here dismiss 'em;
Be gone, *Chimeras*, to your Mother Clouds,
Is there a Fault in us? Have we not search'd
The Womb of Heav'n, examin'd all the Entrails
Of Birds and Beasts, and tir'd the Prophet's Art,
Yet what avails? He, and the Gods together,
Seem like Physicians at a loss to help us.
Therefore, like Wretches that have linger'd long,
We'll snatch the strongest Cordial of our Love;
To Bed, my Fair.
Ghost within. OEdipus!
OEdip. Ha! who calls? Did'st thou not hear a Voice?
Joc. Alas! I did.
Ghost. Jocasta!
Joc. O my Love, my Lord, support me!
OEdip. Call louder, 'till you burst your airy Forms.
Rest on my Hand. Thus, arm'd with Innocence,
I'll face these babling *Dæmons* of the Air.
In spight of Ghosts, I'll on,
Tho' round my Bed the Furies plant their Charms;
I'll break 'em, with *Jocasta* in my Arms.
Clasp'd in the Folds of Love, I'll wait my Doom;
And act my Joys, tho' Thunder shake the Room. [*Ex.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE *A dark Grove.*

Enter Creon *and* Diocles.

Creon.

'TIS better not to be, than be unhappy.

Dioc. What mean you by theſe Words?

Cre. 'Tis better not to be than to be *Creon*. A thinking Soul is Puniſhment enough. But when 'tis Great, like mine, and Wretched too, Then every Thought draws Blood.

Dioc. You are not wretched.

Cre. I am: My Soul's ill married to my Body. I wou'd be young, be handſome, be belov'd: Cou'd I but breathe my ſelf into *Adraſtus*-----

Dioc. You rave; call home your Thoughts.

Cre. I prithee let my Soul take Air awhile; Were ſhe in *OEdipus*, I were a King; Then I had kill'd a Monſter, gain'd a Battel; And had my Rival Priſ'ner; brave, brave Actions: Why have not I done theſe?

Dioc. Your Fortune hinder'd.

Cre. There's it; I have a Soul to do 'em all; But Fortune will have nothing done that's great, But by young handſome Fools: Body and Brawn Do all her Work: *Hercules* was a Fool, And ſtraight grew Famous; a mad boiſt'rous Fool, Nay worſe, a Woman's Fool. Fool is the Stuff, of which Heav'n makes a Hero.

Dioc. A Serpent ne'er becomes a flying Dragon, 'Till he has eat a Serpent.

Cre. Goes it there! I underſtand thee; I muſt kill *Adraſtus*.

Dioc. Or not enjoy your Miſtreſs: *Eurydice* and he are Priſ'ners here, But

But will not long be so: This tell Tale Ghost
Perhaps will clear 'em both.
Cre. Well; 'tis resolv'd.
Dioc. The Princess walks this Way;
You must not meet her, till this be done.
Cre. I must.
Dioc. She hates your Sight;
And more since you accus'd her.
Cre. Urge it not.
I cannot stay to tell thee my Design;
For she's too near.
Enter Eurydice.
How, Madam, were your Thoughts employ'd?
Eur. On Death, and thee.
Cre. Then were they not well sorted: Life and me
Had been the better Match.
Eur. No, I was thinking
On two the most detested Things in Nature;
And they are Death and thee:
Cre. The Thought of Death to one near Death is dreadful:
O 'tis a fearful Thing to be no more.
Or if to be, to wander after Death;
To walk as Spirits do, in Brakes all Day;
And when the Darkness comes, to glide in Paths
That lead to Graves; and in the silent Vault,
Where lies your own pale Shrowd, to hover o'er it,
Striving to enter your forbidden Corps;
And often, often, vainly breathe your Ghost
Into your lifeless Lips.
Then, like a lone benighted Traveller
Shut out from Lodging, shall your Groans be answer'd
By whistling Winds, whose every Blast will shake
Your tender Form to Atomes.
Eur. Must I be this thin Being? And thus wander!
No Quiet after Death!
Cre. None. You must leave
This beauteous Body; all this Youth and Freshness
Must be no more the Object of Desire,
But a cold Lump of Clay;

Which

Which then your discontented Ghost will leave,
And loath its former Lodging.
This is the best of what comes after Death,
Ev'n to the Best.
Eur. What then shall be thy Lot!
Eternal Torments, Baths of boyling Sulphur;
Vicissitudes of Fires, and then of Frosts;
And an old Guardian Fiend, Ugly as thou art,
To hallow in thy Ears at every Lash;
This for *Eurydice*, these for her *Adrastus!*
Cre. For her *Adrastus!*
Eur Yes; for her *Adrastus:*
For Death shall ne'er divide us: Death, what's Death!
Dioc. You seem'd to fear it.
Eur But I more Fear *Creon.*
To take that hunch-back'd Monster in my Arms;
Th' excrescence of a Man.
Dioc. to Cre. See what you've gain'd.
Eur. Death only can be dreadful to the Bad,
To Innocence, 'tis like a Bug-bear dress'd
To frighten Children; pull but off his Masque
And he'll appear a Friend.
Cre. You talk too slightly
Of Death and Hell. Let me inform you better.
Eur. You best can tell th' News of your own Coun-[try.
Dioc. Nay, now you are too sharp.
Eur. Can I be so to one who has accus'd me
Of Murder and of Parricide?
Cre. You provok'd me.
And yet I only did thus far accuse you,
As next of Blood to *Lajus.* Be advis'd,
And you may live.
Eur. The Means?
Cre. 'Tis offer'd you.
The Fool *Adrastus* has accus'd himself.
Eur. He has indeed, to take the Guilt from me.
Cre. He says he Loves you; if he does, 'tis well.
He ne'er cou'd prove it in a better Time.
Eur. Then Death must be his Recompence for Love.
Cre. 'Tis a Fool's just Reward.

The Wiſe can make a better Uſe of Life.
But 'tis the young Man's Pleaſure; his Ambition;
I grudge him not that Favour.
Eur. When he's dead,
Where ſhall I find his Equal!
Cre. Every where.
Fine empty Things, like him,
The Court ſwarms with 'em.
Fine fighting Things; in Camps they are ſo common,
Crows feed on nothing elſe; Plenty of Fools;
A glut of 'em in *Thebes*.
And Fortune ſtill takes care they ſhou'd be ſeen;
She places 'em aloft, o'th' topmoſt Spoke
Of all her Wheel. Fools are the daily Work
Of Nature; her Vocation; if ſhe form
A Man, ſhe loſes by't, 'tis too expenſive;
'Twou'd make ten Fools: A Man's a Prodigy.
Eur. That is a *Creon*: O thou black Detracter,
Who ſpitt'ſt thy Venom againſt Gods and Men!
Thou Enemy of Eyes:
Thou who lov'ſt nothing but what nothing loves,
And that's thy ſelf; who haſt conſpir'd againſt
My Life and Fame, to make me loath'd by all;
And only fit for thee.
But for *Adraſtus* Death, good Gods, his Death!
What Curſe ſhall I invent?
Dior. No more; he's here.
Eur. He ſhall be ever here.
He who wou'd give his Life; give up his Fame.----

Enter Adraſtus.

If all the Excellence of Woman-kind
Were mine;---- No, 'tis too little all for him.
Were I made up of endleſs, endleſs Joys.----
Adr. And ſo thou art.
The Man who loves like me,
Wou'd think ev'n Infamy, the worſt of Ills,
Were cheaply purchas'd, were thy Love the Price.
Uncrown'd, a Captive, nothing left but Honour;
'Tis the laſt Thing a Prince ſhou'd throw away;

But

But when the Storm grows loud, and threat'ns Love,
Throw ev'n that over-board, for Love's the Jewel;
And laſt it muſt be kept.

Cre. to Dioc. Work him be ſure
To Rage, he's paſſionate;
Make him th' Aggreſſor.

Dioc. O falſe Love, falſe Honour.

Cre. Diſſembled both, and falſe!

Adr. Dar'ſt thou ſay this to me! [you?

Cre. To you, why what are you, that I ſhou'd fear
I am not *Lajus*: Hear me, Prince of *Argos*,
You give what's nothing, when you give your Honour;
'Tis gone; 'tis loſt in Battel. For your Love,
Vows made in Wine are not ſo falſe at that:
You kill'd her Father; you confeſs'd you did. [Daughter.
A mighty Argument to prove your Paſſion to the

Adr. (*Aſide.*) Gods, muſt I bear this Brand, and
The Lye to his foul Throat! [not retort

Dioc. Baſely you kill'd him.

Adr. (*Aſide.*) O, I burn inward; my Blood's all o'fire.
Alcides, when the poiſon'd Shirt ſate cloſeſt,
Had but an Ague Fit to this my Feaver.
Yet, for *Eurydice*, ev'n this I'll ſuffer,
To free my Love.--- Well then, I kill'd him baſely.

Cre. Fairly, I'm ſure, you cou'd not.

Dioc. Nor alone.

Cre. You had your Fellow-Thieves about you,
They conquer'd, and you kill'd. [Prince;

Adr. (*Aſide.*) Down ſwelling Heart!
'Tis for thy Princeſs all.--- O my *Eurydice!*-- [*To her.*

Eur. to him. Reproach not thus the Weakneſs of my Sex,
As if I cou'd not bear a ſhameful Death,
Rather than ſee you burden'd with a Crime,
Of which I know you free.

Cre. You do ill, Madam,
To let your head-long Love triumph o'er Nature:
Dare you defend your Father's Murderer?

Eur. You know he kill'd him not.

Cre. Let him ſay ſo.

Dioc. See, he ſtands mute.

Cre. O pow'r of Conſcience, ev'n in wicked Men!
It works, it ſtings, it will not let him utter
One Syllable, one No to clear himſelf
From the moſt baſe, deteſted, horrid Act
That e'er cou'd ſtain a Villain, not a Prince.

Adr. Ha! Villain!

Dioc. Eccho to him Groves: Cry Villain.

Adr. Let me conſider! Did I murther *Lajus*,
Thus like a Villain!

Cre. Beſt revoke your Words,
And ſay you kill'd him not.

Adr. Not like a Villain; prithee change me that
For any other Lye.

Dioc. No, Villain, Villain.

Cre. You kill'd him not! Proclaim your Innocence.
Accuſe the Princeſs: So I knew 'twou'd be.

Adr. I thank thee, thou inſtruct'ſt me:
No matter how I kill'd him.

Cre. (*Aſide.*) Cool'd again.

Eur. Thou, who uſurp'ſt the ſacred Name of Conſcience,
Did not thy own declare him Innocent,
To me declare him ſo? The King ſhall know it.

Cre. You will not be believ'd, for I'll forſwear it.

Eur. What's now thy Conſcience?

Cre. 'Tis my Slave, my Drudge, my ſupple Glove,
My upper Garment, to put on, throw off,
As I think beſt. 'Tis my obedient Conſcience.

Adr. Infamous Wretch!

Cre. My Conſcience ſhall not do me the ill Office
To ſave a Rival's Life; when thou art dead,
(As dead thou ſhalt be, or be yet more baſe
Than thou think'ſt me,
By forfeiting her Life to ſave thy own.----)
Know this, and let it grate thy very Soul,
She ſhall be mine: (She is, if Vows were binding,)
Mark me, the Fruit of all thy Faith and Paſſion,
Ev'n of thy fooliſh Death, ſhall all be mine.

Adr. Thine, ſay'ſt thou, Monſter;
Shall my Love be thine?
O, I can bear no more!

Thy

Thy cunning Engines have with labour rais'd
My heavy Anger, like a mighty Weight,
To fall and paſh thee dead.
See here thy Nuptials; ſee, thou raſh *Ixion*, [*Draws.*
Thy promis'd *Juno* vaniſh'd in a Cloud;
And in her room avenging Thunder rowls
To blaſt thee thus.——Come both.--- [*Both Draw.*
Cre. 'Tis what I wiſh'd!
Now ſee whoſe Arm can lanch the ſurer Bolt,
And who's the better *Jove!* --- [*Fight.*
Eur. Help; Murther, help!
Enter Hæmon *and Guards, run betwixt them and beat down their Swords.* [Furies,
Ham. Hold; hold your Impious Hands: I think the
To whom this Grove is hallow'd, have inſpir'd you:
Now, by my Soul, the holieſt Earth of *Thebes*
You have prophan'd with War. Nor Tree, nor Plant
Grows here, but what is fed with Magick Juice,
All full of Human Souls; that cleave their Barks
To dance at Midnight by the Moon's pale Beams.
At leaſt two hundred Years theſe reverend Shades
Have known no Blood, but of black Sheep and Oxen,
Shed by the Prieſt's own Hand to *Proſerpine*.
Adr. Forgive a Stranger's Ignorance: I knew not
The Honours of the Place.
Ham. Thou, *Creon*, did'ſt:
Not *OEdipus*, were all his Foes here lodg'd,
Durſt violate the Religion of theſe Groves,
To touch one ſingle Hair; but muſt unarm'd,
Parle as in a Truce, or ſurlily avoid
What moſt he long'd to kill.
Cre. I drew not firſt, but in my own Defence.
Adr. I was provok'd
Beyond Man's Patience: All Reproach could urge:
Was us'd to kindle one not apt to bear.
Ham. 'Tis *OEdipus*, not I, muſt judge this Act:
Lord *Creon*, you and *Diocles* retire;
Tireſias, and the Brother-hood of Prieſts,
Approach the Place: None at theſe Rites aſſiſt,

But you th' accus'd, who by the Mouth of *Lajus*
Muſt be abſolv'd, or doom'd.
Adr. I bear my Fortune.
Eur. And I provoke my Tryal.
Ham. 'Tis at Hand.
For ſee the Prophet comes with Vervin crown'd,
The Prieſts with Yeugh, a venerable Band;
We leave you to the Gods.
[*Ex.* Hæmon *with* Creon *and* Diocles.
Enter Tireſias, *led by* Manto: *The Prieſts follow; all cloathed in long black Habits.*
Tir. Approach, ye Lovers;
Ill-fated Pair! Whom, ſeeing not, I know:
This Day your kindly Stars in Heav'n were join'd;
When lo, an envious Planet interpos'd,
And threaten'd both with Death: I fear, I fear.
Eur. Is there no God ſo much a Friend to Love,
Who can controul the Malice of our Fate?
Are they all deaf? Or have the Giants Heav'n?
Tir. The Gods are juſt-----
But how can Finite meaſure Infinite?
Reaſon! Alas, it does not know it ſelf!
Yet Man, vain Man, wou'd with this ſhort-lin'd
Fathom the vaſt Abyſs of heav'nly Juſtice. [Plummet.
Whatever is, is in its Cauſes juſt;
Since all Things are by Fate. But purblin'd Man
Sees but a part o' th' Chain; the neareſt Links;
His Eyes not carrying to that equal Beam
That poiſes all above.
Eur. Then we muſt die!
Tir. The Danger's imminent this Day.
Adr. Why then there's one Day leſs for human Ills:
And who wou'd moan himſelf, for ſuffering that,
Which in a Day muſt paſs? Something, or nothing--
I ſhall be what I was again, before
I was *Adraſtus*; -------
Penurious Heav'n, can'ſt thou not add a Night
To our one Day; give me a Night with her,
And I'll give all the reſt.
Tir. She broke her Vow

First made to *Creon*: But the Time calls on,
And *Lajus* Death must now be made more plain.
How loath I am to have recourse to Rites
So full of Horrour, that I once rejoyce
I want the Use of Sight.——

1 *Pr.* The Ceremonies stay.

Tir. Chuse the darkest part o' th' Grove;
Such as Ghosts at Noon-day love.
Dig a Trench, and dig it nigh
Where the Bones of *Lajus* lie.
Altars rais'd of Turf, or Stone,
Will th' Infernal Pow'rs have none.
Answer me, if this be done?

All Pr. 'Tis done.

Tir. Is the Sacrifice made fit?
Draw her backward to the Pit:
Draw the barren Heyfer back;
Barren let her be, and Black.
Cut the curled Hair that grows
Full betwixt her Horns and Brows;
And turn your Faces from the Sun;
Answer me, if this be done?

All Pr. 'Tis done.

Tir. Pour in Blood, and Blood like Wine,
To Mother Earth and *Proserpine*:
Mingle Milk into the Stream;
Feast the Ghosts that love the Steam;
Snatch a Brand from Funeral Pile,
Toss it in to make 'em boyl;
And turn your Faces from the Sun;
Answer me, if all be done?

All Pr. All is done.

[*Peal of Thunder, and Flashes of Lightning; then Groaning below the Stage.*

Man. O what Laments are those? [with Pain,

Tir. The Groans of Ghosts, that cleave the Earth
And heave it up: They pant and stick half way.

[*The Stage wholly darken'd.*

Man. And now a sudden Darkness covers all,
True gennin Night. Night added to the Graves; The

The Fogs are blown full in the Face of Heav'n.

Tir. Am I but half obey'd. Infernal Gods,
Muſt you have Muſick too? then tune your Voices,
And let 'em have ſuch Sounds as Hell ne'er heard
Since *Orpheus* brib'd the Shades.

Muſick firſt. Then Sing.

1. *Hear, ye ſullen Pow'rs below:*
Hear, ye Taskers of the Dead.
2. *You that boiling Cauldrons blow,*
You that ſcum the melton Lead.
3. *You that pinch with Red-hot Tongs.*
1. *You that drive the trembling Hoſts*
Of poor, poor Ghoſts,
With your ſharpen'd Prongs;
2. *You that thruſt 'em off the Brim.*
3. *You that plunge 'em when they ſwim;*
1. *'Till they drown;*
'Till they go,
On a row,
Down, down, down
Ten thouſand, thouſand, thouſand Fathoms low.

Chorus. *'Till they drown,* &c.

1. *Muſick for a while*
Shall your Cares beguile:
Wond'ring how your Pains were eas'd;
2. *And diſdaining to be pleas'd;*
3. *'Till* Alecto *free the Dead*
From their eternal Bands;
'Till the Snakes drop from her head,
And Whip from out her Hands.
1. *Come away,*
Do not ſtay,
But obey,
While we play,
For Hell's broke up, and Ghoſts have Holy-day.

Chorus. *Come away,* &c.

[A flaſh of Light'ning: The Stage is made bright, and the Ghoſts are ſeen paſſing betwixt the Trees.

1. Lajus! 2. Lajus! 3. Lajus! 1. *Hear!*

1. *Hear!* 2. *Hear!* 3. *Hear!*
Tir. *Hear and appear.*
By the Fates that ſpun thy Thread;
Cho. *Which are Three.*
Tir. *By the Furies fierce, and dread!*
Cho. *Which are Three.*
Tir. *By the Judges of the Dead!*
Cho. *Which are Three.*
Three times Three!
Tir. *By Hell's blue Flame:*
By the Stygian *Lake:*
And by Demogorgon's *Name,*
At which Ghoſts quake,
Hear and appear.

[The Ghoſt of *Laius* riſes arm'd in his Chariot as he was ſlain. And behind his Chariot, ſit the Three who were murder'd with him.

Ghoſt of Laius. Why haſt thou drawn me from my Pains below,
To ſuffer worſe above; to ſee the Day,
And *Thebes* more hated? Hell is Heav'n to *Thebes.*
For Pity ſend me back, where I may hide,
In willing Night, this ignominious Head:
In Hell I ſhun the publick Scorn; and then
They hunt me for their Sport, and hoot me as I fly:
Behold ev'n now they grin at my gor'd ſide,
And chatter at my Wounds.
Tir. I pity thee:
Tell but why *Thebes* is for thy Death accurſt,
And I'll unbind the Charm.
Ghoſt. O ſpare my Shame.
Tir. Are theſe two innocent?
Ghoſt. Of my Death they are.
But he who holds my Crown, Oh, muſt I ſpeak!
Was doom'd to do what Nature moſt abhors.
The Gods foreſaw it; and forbad his Being,
Before he yet was Born. I broke their Laws,
And cloath'd with Fleſh his pre-exiſting Soul.
Some kinder Pow'r, too weak for Deſtiny,
Took pity, and indu'd his new form'd Mass With

With Temperance, Juſtice, Prudence, Fortitude,
And every Kingly Vertue: But in vain.
For Fate, that ſent him hood-winkt to the World,
Perform'd its work by his miſtaking Hands.
Ask'ſt thou who murder'd me? 'twas *OEdipus!*
Who ſtains my Bed with Inceſt? *OEdipus!*
For whom then are you curſt, but *OEdipus!*
He comes; the Parricide: I cannot bear him:
My Wounds ake at him; Oh his murd'rous Breath
Venoms my airy Subſtance! hence with him,
Baniſh him; ſweep him out; the Plague he bears
Will blaſt your Fields, and mark his Way with Ruin:
From *Thebes*, my Throne, my Bed, let him be driv'n;
Do you forbid him Earth, and I'll forbid him Heav'n.
[*Ghoſt deſcends.*

Enter OEdipus, Creon, Hæmon, *&c.*

OEdip. What's this! Methought ſome peſtilential [Blaſt
Struck me juſt entring; and ſome unſeen Hand
Struggl'd to puſh me backward! Tell me why
My Hair ſtands briſtl'ing up, why my Fleſh trembles?
You ſtare at me! Then Hell has been among ye,
And ſome lag Fiend yet lingers in the Grove.

Tir. What Omen ſaw'ſt thou ent'ring?

OEdip. A young Stork,
That bore his aged Parent on his Back;
Till weary with the Weight, ſhe ſhook him off,
And peck'd out both his Eyes.

Adr. Oh, *OEdipus!*

Eur. Oh, wretched *OEdipus!*

Tir. O! Fatal King! [Name?

OEdip. What mean theſe Exclamations on my
I thank the Gods, no ſecret Thoughts reproach me:
No: I dare challenge Heav'n to turn me outward,
And ſhake my Soul quite empty in your Sight.
Then wonder not that I can bear unmov'd
Theſe fix'd Regards, and ſilent Threats of Eyes;
A generous Fierceneſs dwells with Innocence;
And conſcious Vertue is allow'd ſome Pride.

Tir. Thou know'ſt not what thou ſay'ſt.

OEdip. What mutters he! tell me, *Eurydice*; Thou

Thou ſhak'ſt; Thy Soul's a Woman. Speak, *Adraſtus*;
And boldly as thou met'ſt my Arms in fight;
Dar'ſt thou not ſpeak? why then 'tis bad indeed;
Tireſias, thee I ſummon by thy Prieſthood,
Tell me what News from Hell; Where *Lajus* points,
And who's the guilty Head!

Tir. Let me not anſwer.

OEdip. Be dumb then, and betray thy native Soil
To farther Plagues.

Tir. I dare not name him to thee.

OEdip. Dar'ſt thou converſe with Hell, and canſt thou fear
An human Name!

Tir. Urge me no more to tell a Thing which known
Would make thee more unhappy; 'Twill be found,
Tho' I am ſilent.

OEdip. Old and obſtinate! Then thou thy ſelf
Art Author, or Accomplice, of this Murther,
And ſhun'ſt the Juſtice, which by publick Ban
Thou haſt incurr'd.

Tir. O, if the Guilt were mine,
It were not half ſo great; know wretched Man,
Thou only, thou art guilty; thy own Curſe
Falls heavy on thy ſelf.

OEdip. Speak this again;
But ſpeak it to the Winds when they are loudeſt;
Or to the raging Seas, they'll hear as ſoon,
And ſooner will believe.

Tir. Then hear me Heav'n,
For bluſhing thou haſt ſeen it; Hear me Earth,
Whoſe hollow Womb could not contain this Murder,
But ſent it back to Light; And thou Hell, hear me,
Whoſe own black Seal has 'firm'd this horrid Truth,
OEdipus murther'd *Lajus*.

OEdip. Rot the Tongue,
And blaſted be the Mouth that ſpoke that Lye.
Thou blind of Sight, but thou more blind of Soul;

Tir. Thy Parents thought not ſo.

OEdip. Who were my Parents?

Tir. Thou ſhalt know too ſoon.

OEdip. Why ſeek I Truth from thee? The

The Smiles of Courtiers, and the Harlots Tears,
The Tradesmen's Oaths, and Mourning of an Heir,
Are Truths to what Priests tell.
O why has Priest-hood privilege to lye,
And yet to be believ'd! ---- thy Age protects thee---
Tir. Thou canst not kill me; 'tis not in thy Fate,
And 'twas to kill thy Father; wed thy Mother;
And beget Sons, thy Brothers.
OEdip. Riddles, Riddles!
Tir. Thou art thy self a Riddle; a perplext
Obscure *Ænigma*, which when thou unty'st,
Thou shalt be found and lost.
OEdip. Impossible!
Adrastus, speak, and as thou art a King,
Whose Royal Word is sacred, clear my Fame.
Adr. Wou'd I cou'd!
OEdip. Ha, wilt thou not? Can that *Plebian* Vice
Of Lying Mount to Kings! can they be tainted!
Then Truth is lost on Earth.
Cre. The Cheat's too gross;
Adrastus is his Oracle, and he,
The pious Juggler, but *Adrastus*'s Organ.
OEdip. 'Tis plain, the Priest's suborn'd to free the [Pris'ner.
Cre. And turn the Guilt on you.
OEdip. O, honest *Creon*, how hast thou been bely'd?
Eur. Hear me.
Cre. She's brib'd to save her Lover's Life.
Adr. If, *OEdipus*, thou think'st -------
Cre. Hear him not speak.
Adr. Then hear those holy Men.
Cre. Priests, Priests all brib'd, all Priests.
OEdip. *Adrastus* I have found thee;
The Malice of a vanquish'd Man has seiz'd thee.
Adr. If Envy and not Truth -------
OEdip. I'll hear no more; Away with him.
[Hæmon *takes him off by Force*; Creon *and* Eurydice *follow*.
To Tir: Why stand'st thou here, Impostor!
So old, and yet so wicked ------- Lye for Gain;
And Gain so short as Age can promise thee! *Tir.*

Tir. So ſhort a Time as I have yet to live
Exceeds thy pointed Hour; remember *Lajus!*
No more; if e'er we meet again, 'twill be
In mutual Darkneſs; we ſhall feel before us
To reach each other's Hand; remember *Lajus!*
[*Ex.* Tireſias: *Prieſts follow.*

OEdipus *ſolus.*

Remember *Lajus!* that's the Burden ſtill:
Murther and Inceſt! but to hear them nam'd
My Soul ſtarts in me: The good Sentinel
Stands to his Weapons; takes the firſt Alarm
To guard me from ſuch Crimes---- Did I kill *Lajus!*
Then I walk'd ſleeping, in ſome frightful Dream,
My Soul then ſtole my Body out by Night;
And brought me back to Bed 'ere Morning-wake.
It cannot be ev'n this remoteſt Way,
But ſome dark Hint would juſtle forward now,
And goad my Memory---- O my *Jocaſta!*

Enter Jocaſta.

Joc. Why are you thus diſturb'd?
OEdip. Why, would'ſt thou think it?
No leſs than Murder.
Joc. Murder! what of Murder?
OEdip. Is Murder then no more? Add Parricide,
And Inceſt; bear not theſe a frightful Sound?
Joc. Alas!
OEdip. How poor a Pity is Alas
For two ſuch Crimes! ---- was *Lajus* us'd to lye?
Joc. Oh no: The moſt ſincere, plain, honeſt Man---
One who abhorr'd a Lye.
OEdip. Then he has got that Quality in Hell.
He charges me---- but why accuſe I him?
I did not hear him ſpeak it: They accuſe me;
The Prieſt, *Adraſtus* and *Eurydice*,
Of murdering *Lajus*---- Tell me, while I think on't,
Has Old *Tireſias* practis'd long this Trade?
Joc. What Trade?
OEdip. Why, this Fore-telling Trade?
Joc. For many Years.

OEdip. Has he before this Day accus'd me?
Joc. Never.
OEdip. Have you 'ere this inquir'd, who did this [Murder?
Joc. Often; but ſtill in vain.
OEdip. I am ſatisfy'd.
Then 'tis an Infant-lye; but one Day old.
The Oracle takes place before the Prieſt;
The Blood of *Lajus* was to murder *Lajus*:
I'm not of *Lajus*'s Blood.
Joc. Ev'n Oracles
Are always doubtful, and are often forg'd:
Lajus had one, which never was fulfill'd,
Nor ever can be now!
OEdip. And what foretold it?
Joc. That he ſhould have a Son by me, fore-doom'd
The Murderer of his Father: True indeed,
A Son was born; but to prevent that Crime,
The wretched Infant of a guilty Fate,
Bor'd through his untry'd Feet, and bound with Cords,
On a bleak Mountain, naked was expos'd:
The King himſelf liv'd many, many Years,
And found a different Fate; by Robbers murder'd,
Where Three Ways meet: Yet theſe are Oracles;
And this the Faith we owe 'em
OEdip. Say'ſt thou, Woman?
By Heav'n thou haſt awaken'd ſomewhat in me,
That ſhakes my very Soul!
Joc. What, new Diſturbance! [thou ſaid'ſt it!)
OEdip. Methought thou ſaid'ſt---- (or do I dream
This Murder was on *Lajus* Perſon done,
Where Three Ways meet?
Joc. So common Fame reports.
OEdip. Wou'd it had ly'd.
Joc. Why, good my Lord?
OEdip. No Queſtions:
'Tis buſy Time with me; diſpatch mine firſt;
Say where, where was it done!
Joc. Mean you the Murder? [Murder?
OEdip. Could'ſt thou not anſwer without naming

Joc.

Joc. They ſay in *Phocide*; on the Verge that parts it
From *Daulia*, and from *Delphos*.
OEdip. So! --- How long! when happen'd this!
Joc. Some little Time before you came to *Thebes*.
OEdip. What will the Gods do with me!
Joc. What means that Thought?
OEdip. Something: But 'tis not yet your Turn to ask:
How old was *Lajus*, what his Shape, his Stature,
His Action, and his Mien? quick, quick, your Anſwer.
Joc. Big made he was, and tall: His Port was fierce,
Erect his Countenance: Manly Majeſty
Sate in his Front, and darted from his Eyes,
Commanding all he viewed: His Hair juſt grizled,
As in a green old Age: Bate but his Years
You are his Picture. [his Picture?
OEdip. (*Aſide.*) Pray Heav'n he drew me not! am I
Joc. So I have often told you.
OEdip. True, you have;
Add that to the reſt. How was the King
Attended when he travell'd?
Joc. By Four Servants; he went out privately.
OEdip. Well counted ſtill;
One 'ſcap'd I hear; what ſince became of him?
Joc. When he beheld you firſt, as King in *Thebes*,
He kneel'd, and trembling beg'd I wou'd diſmiſs him;
He had my Leave; and now he lives retir'd.
OEdip. This Man muſt be produc'd; he muſt *Jocaſta*.
Joc. He ſhall --- yet have I leave to ask you why?
OEdip. Yes, you ſhall know: For where ſhould I re-
The Anguiſh of my Soul, but in your Breaſt! [poſe
I need not tell you *Corinth* claims my Birth;
My Parents, *Polybus* and *Merope*,
Two Royal Names; their only Child am I.
It happen'd once; 'twas at a Bridal Feaſt,
One warm with Wine, told me I was a Foundling,
Not the King's Son; I ſtung with this Reproach,
Struck him; my Father heard of it; the Man
was made ask Pardon; and the Buſineſs huſh'd.
Joc. 'Twas ſomewhat odd.
OEdip. And ſtrangely it perplext me.

I ſtole away to *Delphos*, and implor'd
The God, to tell my certain Parentage.
He bad me ſeek no farther.----- 'Twas my Fate
To kill my Father, and pollute his Bed,
By marrying her who bore me.
Joc. Vain, vain Oracles!
OEdip. But yet they frighted me;
I lookt on *Corinth* as a Place accurſt,
Reſolv'd my Deſtiny ſhould wait in vain;
And never catch me there.
Joc. Too nice a Fear. [ſoon.
OEdip. Suſpend your Thoughts, and flatter not too
Juſt in the Place you nam'd, where Three Ways meet,
And near that Time, five Perſons I encounter'd;
One was too like, (Heav'n grant it prove not him)
Whom you deſcribe for *Lajus*: Inſolent
And fierce they were, as Men who liv'd on Spoil.
I judg'd 'em Robbers, and by Force repell'd
The Force they us'd; in ſhort, four Men I ſlew.
The fifth upon his Knees demanding Life,
My Mercy gave it----- Bring me Comfort now,
If I ſlew *Lajus*, what can be more wretched!
From *Thebes* and you my Curſe has baniſh'd me;
From *Corinth* Fate.
Joc. Perplex not thus your Mind;
My Husband fell by Multitudes oppreſt,
So *Phorbas* ſaid. This Band you chanc'd to meet,
And murder'd not my *Lajus*, but reveng'd him.
OEdip. There's all my Hope; let *Phorbas* tell me
And I ſhall live again------ [this,
To you, good Gods, I make my laſt Appeal;
Or clear my Vertue, or my Crime reveal.
If wand'ring in the Maze of Fate I run,
And backward trod the Paths I ſought to ſhun,
Impute my Errors to your own Decree;
My Hands are guilty, but my Heart is free. [*Ex.* Amb.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter Pyracmon *and* Creon.

Pyr.

SOme Buſineſs of Import that Triumph wears
You ſeem to go with; nor is it hard to gueſs
When you are pleas'd, by a malicious Joy;
Whoſe red and fiery Beams caſt thro' your Viſage
A glowing Pleaſure. Sure you ſmile Revenge,
And I could gladly hear.

Cre. Would'ſt thou believe!
This giddy hair-brain'd King, whom old *Tireſias*
Has Thunder-ſtruck with heavy Accuſation,
Tho' conſcious of no inward Guilt, yet fears;
He fears *Jocaſta*, fears himſelf, his Shadow;
He fears the Multitude; and, which is worth
An Age of Laughter, out of all Mankind,
He chuſes me to be his Orator:
Swears that *Adraſtus*, and the lean-look'd Prophet,
Are joint Conſpirators; and wiſh'd me to
Appeaſe the raving *Thebans*; which I ſwore
To do.

Pyr. A dangerous Undertaking;
Directly oppoſite to your own Intereſt.

Cre. No, dull *Pyracmon*; when I left his Preſence,
With all the Wings with which Revenge could inſpire
My Flight, I gain'd the mid'ſt o' th' City:
There, ſtanding on a Pile of Dead and Dying,
I to the mad and fickly Multitude,
With interrupting Sobs, cry'd out, O *Thebes*,
O wretched *Thebes*, thy King, thy *OEdipus*,
This barbarous Stranger, this Uſurper, Monſter,
Is by the Oracle, the wiſe *Tireſias*,
Proclaim'd the Murderer of thy Royal *Lajus*;
Jocaſta too, no longer now my Siſter,

Is found Complotter in the horrid Deed.
Here I renounce all tye of Blood and Nature,
For thee, O *Thebes*, dear *Thebes*, poor bleeding *Thebes*.
And there I wept, and then the Rabble howl'd,
And roar'd, and with a thousand antick Mouths
Gabbled Revenge, Revenge was all the Cry.

Pyr. This cannot fail: I see you on the Throne;
And *OEdipus* cast out.

Cre. Then strait came on
Alcander, with a wild and bellowing Croud,
Whom he had wrought; I whisper'd him to join,
And head the Forces while the Heat was in 'em.
So to the Palace I return'd, to meet
The King, and greet him with another Story.
But see, he enters.

Enter OEdipus *and* Jocasta, *attended.*

OEdip. Said you that *Phorbas* is return'd, and yet
Intreats he may return, without being ask'd
Of ought concerning what we have discover'd?

Joc. He started when I told him your Intent,
Replying, what he knew of that Affair
Would give no Satisfaction to the King.
Then, falling on his Knees, beg'd, as for Life,
To be dismiss'd from Court. He trembl'd too,
As if convulsive Death had seiz'd upon him,
And stammer'd in his abrupt Pray'r so wildly,
That had he been the Murderer of *Lajus*,
Guilt and Distraction could not have shook him more.

OEdip. By your Description, sure as Plagues and Death
Lay waste our *Thebes*, some Deed that shuns the Light
Begot those Fears. If thou respect'st my Peace,
Secure him, dear *Jocasta*; for my Genius
Shrinks at his Name.

Joc. Rather let him go:
So my poor boding Heart would have it be,
Without a Reason.

OEdip. Hark, the *Thebans* come!
Therefore retire. And, once more, if thou lov'st me,
Let *Phorbas* be retain'd.

Joc.

Joc. You ſhall,
While I have Life, be ſtill obey'd.
In vain you ſooth me with your ſoft Indearments,
And ſet the faireſt Countenance to view,
Your gloomy Eyes, my Lord, betray a Deadneſs
And inward Languiſhing. That Oracle
Eats like a ſubtil Worm its venom'd Way,
Preys on your Heart, and rots the noble Core,
Howe'er the beauteous Out-ſide ſhews ſo lovely.
OEdip. O, thou wilt kill me with thy Love's exceſs!
All, all is well; retire, the *Thebans* come. [*Ex.* Joc.
Ghoſt. OEdipus!
OEdip. Ha! again that Scream of Woe!
Thrice have I heard, thrice ſince the Morning dawn'd
It hallow'd loud, as if my Guardian Spirit
Call'd from ſome vaulted Manſion, *OEdipus!*
Or is it but the Work of Melancholy?
When the Sun ſets, Shadows, that ſhew'd at Noon
But ſmall, appear moſt long and terrible;
So when we think Fate hovers o'er our Heads,
Our Apprehenſions ſhoot beyond all bounds;
Owls, Ravens, Crickets, ſeem the Watch of Death,
Nature's worſt Vermin, ſcarce her God-like Sons.
Ecchoes, the very leavings of a Voice,
Grow babling Ghoſts, and call us to our Graves:
Each Mole-hill Thought ſwells to a huge *Olympus*,
While we fantaſtick Dreamers heave and puff,
And ſweat with an Imaginations weight;
As if, like *Atlas*, with theſe mortal Shoulders
We could ſuſtain the Burden of the World.
[Creon *comes forward.*
Cre. O, ſacred Sir, my Royal Lord ——
OEdip. What now?
Thou ſeem'ſt affrighted at ſome dreadful Action,
Thy Breath comes ſhort, thy darted Eyes are fixt
On me for Aid, as if thou wert purſu'd:
I ſent thee to the *Thebans*, ſpeak thy Wonder;
Fear not, this Palace is a Sanctuary,
The King himſelf's thy Guard.
Cre. For me, alas,

My Life's not worth a Thought, when weigh'd with yours!
But fly, my Lord, fly as your Life is ſacred,
Your Fate is precious to your frithful *Creon*,
Who therefore, on his Knees, thus proſtrate begs
You would remove from *Thebes* that vows your Ruin.
When I but offer'd at your Innocence,
They gather'd Stones, and menac'd me with Death,
And drove me through the Streets, with Imprecations
Againſt your ſacred Perſon, and thoſe Traitors
Which juſtify'd your Guilt: Which curs'd *Tireſias*
Told, as from Heav'n, was cauſe of their Deſtruction.

OEdip. Riſe worthy *Creon*, haſte and take our Guard,
Rank 'em in equal Part upon the Square,
Then open every Gate of this our Palace,
And let the Torrent in. Hark, it comes: [*Shout.*
I hear 'em roar: Be gon, and break down all
The Dams that would oppoſe their furious Paſſage.
[*Ex.* Creon *with Guards.*

Enter Adraſtus, *his Sword drawn.*

Adr. Your City
Is all in Arms, all bent to your Deſtruction;
I heard but now, where I was cloſe confin'd,
A thund'ring Shout, which made my Jaylors vaniſh,
Cry, Fire the Palace; where's the cruel King?
Yet, by th' Infernal Gods, thoſe awful Pow'rs,
That have accus'd you, which theſe Ears have heard,
And theſe Eyes ſeen, I muſt believe you guiltleſs;
For, ſince I knew the Royal *OEdipus*,
I have obſerv'd in all his Acts ſuch Truth
And God-like Clearneſs; that to the laſt guſh
Of Blood and Spirits, I'll defend his Life,
And here have ſworn to periſh by his Side.

OEdip. Be witneſs, Gods, how near this touches me.
[*Embracing him.*
O what, what Recompence can Glory make?

Adr. Defend your Innocence, ſpeak like your ſelf,
And awe the Rebels with your dauntleſs Vertue.
But, hark! the Storm comes nearer.

OEdip. Let it come.
The force of Majeſty is never known But

But in a general Wrack: Then, then is ſeen
The Difference 'twixt a Threſhold and a Throne.
Enter Creon, Pyracmon, Alcander, Tireſias, Thebans.
Alc. Where, where's this cruel King? *Thebans*, be-
There ſtands your Plague, the Ruin, Deſolation [hold
Of this unhappy ------ ſpeak; ſhall I kill him?
Or ſhall he be caſt out to Baniſhment?
All Theb. To Baniſhment, away with him.
OEdip. Hence, you Barbarians, to your ſlaviſh Di-
Fix to the Earth your ſordid Looks; for he [ſtance;
Who ſtirs, dares more then Mad-men, Fiends or Fu-
Who dares to face me, by the Gods, as well [ries,
May brave the Majeſty of Thund'ring *Jove*.
Did I for this relieve you when beſieg'd
By this fierce Prince, when coop'd within your Walls,
And to the very brink of Fate reduc'd;
When lean-jaw'd Famine made more Havock of you
Than does the Plague? But I rejoyce I know you.
Know the baſe Stuff that temper'd your vile Souls:
The Gods be prais'd, I needed not your Empire,
Born to a greater, nobler, of my own;
Nor ſhall the Scepter of the Earth now win me
To rule ſuch Bautes, ſo barbarous a People.
Adr. Methinks, my Lord, I ſee a ſad Repentance,
A general Conſternation ſpread among 'em.
OEdip. My Reign is at an end; yet e'er I finiſh--
I'll do a Juſtice that becomes a Monarch,
A Monarch, who, i'th' midſt of Swords and Javelins,
Dares act as on his Throne encompaſt round
With Nations for his Guard. *Alcander*, you
Are nobly born, therefore ſhall loſe your Head: [*Seizes*
Here, *Hæmon*, take him; but for this, and this, [*him.*
Let Cords diſpatch 'em. Hence away with 'em.
Tir. O ſacred Prince, pardon diſtracted *Thebes*,
Pardon her, if ſhe acts by Heaven's Award;
If that th' Infernal Spirits have declar'd
The depth of Fate, and if our Oracles
May ſpeak, O do not too ſeverely deal,
But let thy wretched *Thebes* at leaſt complain:
If thou art guilty, Heav'n will make it known; If

If innocent, then let *Tireſias* die. [ſave *Alcander*:
OEdip. I take thee at thy Word. Run, haſte, and
I ſwear the Prophet, or the King ſhall die.
Be Witneſs, all you *Thebans*, of my Oath;
And *Phorbas* be the Umpire.
Tir. I ſubmit. [*Trumpets ſound.*
OEdip. What mean thoſe Trumpets?
Enter Hæmon *with* Alcander, *&c.*
Hæm. From your Native Country,
Great Sir, the fam'd *Ægeon* is arriv'd,
That renown'd Favourite of the King your Father:
He comes as an Ambaſſador from *Corinth*,
And ſues for Audience.
OEdip. Haſte, *Hæmon*, fly, and tell him that I burn
T' embrace him.
Hæm. The Queen, my Lord, at preſent holds him
In private Conference; but behold her here.
Enter Jocaſta, Eurydice, *&c.*
Joc. Hail, happy *OEdipus*, happieſt of Kings!
Henceforth be bleſt, bleſt as thou canſt deſire,
Sleep without Fears the blackeſt Nights away;
Let Furies haunt thy Palace, thou ſhalt ſleep
Secure, thy Slumbers ſhall be ſoft and gentle
As Infants Dreams.
OEdip. What does the Soul of all my Joys intend?
And whither would this Rapture?
Joc. O, I could rave,
Pull down thoſe lying Fanes, and burn that Vault,
From whence reſounded thoſe falſe Oracles,
That rob'd my Love of Reſt: If we muſt pray,
Rear in the Streets bright Altars to the Gods,
Let Virgins Hands adorn the Sacrifice;
And not a Grey-beard forging Prieſt come near,
To pry into the Bowels of the Victim,
And with his Dotage mad the gaping World.
But ſee, the Oracle that I will truſt,
True as the Gods, and affable as Men.
Enter Ægeon, *kneels.*
OEdip. O, to my Arms, welcome, my dear *Ægeon*.
Ten thouſand welcomes, O, my Foſter-Father, Wel-

Welcome as Mercy to a Man condemn'd!
Welcome to me,
As, to a ſinking Mariner,
The lucky Plank that bears him to the Shore!
But ſpeak, O tell me what ſo mighty Joy
Is this thou bring'ſt, which ſo tranſports *Jocaſta?*

Joc. Peace, Peace, *Ægeon*, let *Jocaſta* tell him?
O that I could for ever Charm, as now,
My deareſt *OEdipus:* Thy Royal Father,
Polybus, King of *Corinth*, is no more.

OEdip. Ha! can it be? *Ægeon*, anſwer me,
And ſpeak in ſhort, what my *Jocaſta*'s tranſport
May over-do.

Æge. Since in few Words my Royal Lord, you ask
To know the Truth; King *Polybus* is dead.

OEdip. O all you Powers, is't poſſible? what dead!
But that the Tempeſt of my Joy may riſe
By juſt degrees, and hit at laſt the Stars;
Say, how, how dy'd he? Ha! by Sword, by Fire,
Or Water? by Aſſaſſinates, or Poyſon? ſpeak;
Or did he languiſh under ſome Diſeaſe?

Æge. Of no Diſtemper, of no Blaſt he dy'd,
But fell like Autumn-Fruit that mellow'd long:
Ev'n wonder'd at, becauſe he dropt no ſooner.
Fate ſeem'd to wind him up for fourſcore Years;
Yet freſhly ran he on ten Winters more:
'Till, like a Clock worn out with eating Time,
The Wheels of weary Life at laſt ſtood ſtill.

OEdip. O, let me preſs thee in my youthful Arms,
And ſmother thy old Age in my Embraces:
Yes *Thebans*, yes *Jocaſta*, yes *Adraſtus*,
Old *Polybus*, the King my Father's dead.
Fires ſhall be kindled in the mid'ſt of *Thebes*;
I' th' mid'ſt of Tumult, Wars, and Peſtilence,
I will rejoyce for *Polybus* his Death.
Know, be it known to the Limits of the World;
Yet farther, let it paſs yon dazling Roof,
The Manſion of the Gods, and ſtrike 'em deaf
With everlaſting Peals of thund'ring Joy.

Tir. Fate! Nature! Fortune! What is all this World?

OEdip. Now, Dotard; now, thou blind old wizard Prophet,
Where are your boding Ghosts, your Altars now;
Your Birds of Knowledge, that in dusky Air,
Chatter Futurity; and where are now
Your Oracles, that call'd me Parricide?
Is he not dead? Deep laid in's Monument?
And was not I in *Thebes* when Fate attack'd him?
Avaunt, begone, you Vizors of the Gods!
Were I as other Sons, now I should weep;
But, as I am, I've Reason to rejoyce;
And will, tho' his cold Shade should rise and blast me.
O, for this Death, let Waters break their Bounds,
Rocks, Valleys, Hills, with splitting *Io*'s ring;
Io, *Jocasta*, *Io pæan* sing.

Tir. Who would not now conclude a happy End?
But all Fate's turns are swift and unexpected.

Æge. Your Royal Mother *Merope*, as if
She had no Soul since you forsook the Land,
Waves all the neighb'ring Princes that adore her.

OEdip. Waves all the Princes! poor Heart! for what? O

Æge. She, tho' in full-blown Flow'r of glorious Beauty,
Grows cold, ev'n in the Summer of her Age;
And, for your sake, has sworn to die unmarry'd.

OEdip. How! for my sake, die, and not marry? O,
My Fit returns.

Æge. This Diamond with a thousand Kisses blest,
With thousand Sighs and Wishes for your Safety,
She charg'd me give you, with the general Homage
Of our *Corinthian* Lords.

OEdip. There's Magick in it, take it from my Sight;
There's not a Beam it darts, but carries Hell,
Hot flashing Lust, and Necromantick Incest.
Take it from these sick Eyes, oh hide it from me.
No, my *Jocasta*, tho' *Thebes* cast me out,
While *Merope*'s alive, I'll ne'er return!
O, rather let me walk round the wide World
A Beggar, than accept a Diadem
On such abhorr'd Conditions,

Joc.

Joc. You make, my Lord, your own Unhappineſs,
By theſe extravagant and needleſs Fears.
OEdip. Needleſs! O, all you Gods! By Heav'n I'd
Embrue my Arms up to my very Shoulders [rather
In the dear Entrails of the beſt of Fathers,
Than offer at the execrable Act
Of damn'd Inceſt; therefore no more of her.
Æge. And why, O ſacred Sir, if Subjects may
Preſume to look into their Monarch's Breaſt,
Why ſhould the Chaſte and Spotleſs *Merope*
Infuſe ſuch Thoughts as I muſt bluſh to Name?
OEdip. Becauſe the God of *Delphos* did forewarn
With Thund'ring Oracles. [me,
Æge. May I entreat to know 'em?
OEdip. Yes, my *Ægeon*; but the ſad Remembrance
Quite blaſts my Soul; ſee then the ſwelling Prieſt!
Methinks I have his Image now in View;
He mounts the *Tripos* in a Minute's ſpace,
His clouded Head knocks at the Temple roof,
While from his Mouth
Theſe diſmal Words are heard: [Blood to ſpill,
'Fly, Wretch, whom Fate has doom'd thy Father's
'And with prepoſt'rous Births, thy Mother's Womb
Æge. Is this the Cauſe [to fill.
Why you refuſe the Diadem of *Corinth?*
OEdip. The Cauſe! why, is it not a monſt'rous one?
Æge. Great Sir, you may return; and tho' you
Enjoy the Queen (which all the Gods forbid) [ſhould
The Act would prove no Inceſt.
OEdip. How, *Ægeon?*
Tho' I enjoy'd my Mother, not inceſtuous!
Thou rav'ſt, and ſo do I; and theſe all catch
My madneſs; look, they're dead with deep Diſtraction:
Not Inceſt! what, not Inceſt with my Mother?
Æge. My Lord, Queen *Merope* is not your Mother.
OEdip. Ha! did I hear thee right? not *Merope*
My Mother!
Æge. Nor was *Polybus* your Father. [ſpent
OEdip. Then all my Days and Nights muſt now be

In curious Search, to find out thoſe dark Parents
Who gave me to the World; ſpeak then *Ægeon*,
By all the Gods Cœleſtial and Infernal,
By all the tyes of Nature, Blood, and Friendſhip,
Conceal not from this rack'd deſpairing King
A Point, or ſmalleſt Grain of what thou know'ſt:
Speak then, O anſwer to my Doubts directly,
If Royal *Polybus* was not my Father,
Why was I call'd his Son?

Æge. He, from my Arms,
Receiv'd you as the faireſt Gift of Nature.
Not but you were adorn'd with all the Riches
That Empire could beſtow in coſtly Mantles
Upon its Infant Heir.

OEdip. But was I made the Heir of *Corinth*'s Crown,
Becauſe *Ægeon*'s Hands preſented me?

Æge. By my Advice.
Being paſt all hope of Children,
He took, embrac'd, and own'd you for his Son.

OEdip. Perhaps I then am your's, inſtruct me, Sir;
If it be ſo, I'll kneel and weep before you,
With all the Obedience of a penitent Child,
Imploring Pardon.
Kill me if you pleaſe,
I will not writhe my Body at the Wound:
But ſink upon your Feet with a laſt Sigh,
And ask Forgiveneſs with my dying Hands.

Æge. O riſe, and call not to this aged Cheek
The little Blood which ſhould keep warm my Heart;
You are not mine, nor ought I to be bleſt
With ſuch a God-like Off-ſpring. Sir, I found you
Upon the Mount *Citharon*.

OEdip. O ſpeak, go on, the Air grows ſenſible
Of the great Things you utter, and is calm:
The hurry'd Orbs, with Storms ſo rack'd of late,
Seem to ſtand ſtill, as if that *Jove* were talking.
Citharon! ſpeak, the Valley of *Citharon!*

Æge. Oft-times before I thither did reſort,
Charm'd with the Converſation of a Man
Who led a rural Life, and had Command O'er

O'er all the Shepherds who about thoſe Vales
Tended their numerous Flocks; in this Man's Arms
I ſaw you ſmiling at a fatal Dagger.
Whoſe Point he often offer'd at your Throat;
But then you ſmil'd, and then he drew it back,
Then lifted it again, you ſmil'd again;
'Till he at laſt in fury threw it from him,
And cry'd aloud, the Gods forbid thy Death.
Then I ruſh'd in, and, after ſome Diſcourſe,
To me he did bequeath your innocent Life;
And I, the welcome Care to *Polybus*. [herds?

OEdip. To whom belongs the Maſter of the Shep-

Æge. His Name I knew not, or I have forgot;
That he was of the Family of *Lajus*,
I well remember.

OEdip. And is your Friend alive? for if he be,
I'll buy his Preſence, tho' it coſt my Crown.

Æge. Your menial Attendants beſt can tell
Whether he lives, or not; and who has now
His Place.

Joc. Winds, bear me to ſome barren Iſland,
Where print of humane Feet was never ſeen,
O'er-grown with Weeds of ſuch a monſt'rous Height,
Their baleful Tops are waſh'd with bellying Clouds:
Beneath whoſe venomous Shade I may have vent
For Horrors that would blaſt the Barbarous World.

OEdip. If there be any here that knows the Perſon
Whom he deſcrib'd, I charge him on his Life
To ſpeak; Concealment ſhall be ſudden Death;
But he who brings him forth, ſhall have Reward
Beyond Ambition's Luſt.

Tir. His Name is *Phorbas*:
Jocaſta knows him well; but if I may
Adviſe, Reſt where you are, and ſeek no farther.

OEdip. Then all goes well, ſince *Phorbas* is ſecur'd
By my *Jocaſta*. Haſte, and bring him forth;
My Love, my Queen, give Orders. Ha! what mean
Theſe Tears, and Groans, and Struglings? ſpeak, my
What are thy Troubles? [Fair,

Joc. Yours; and yours are mine: Let

Let me conjure you take the Prophet's Counsel,
And let this *Phorbas* go.
OEdip. Not for the World.
By all the Gods, I'll know my Birth, tho' Death
Attends the Search: I have already past
The middle of the Stream; and to return
Seems greater Labour, than to venture o'er:
Therefore produce him.
Joc. Once more, by the Gods,
I beg, my *OEdipus*, my Lord, my Life,
My Love, my all, my only utmost Hope,
I beg you, banish *Phorbas*: O, the Gods,
I kneel, that you may grant this first Request:
Deny me all Things else; but, for my Sake,
And as you prize your own eternal Quiet,
Never let *Phorbas* come into your Presence.
OEdip. You must be rais'd, and *Phorbas* shall appear,
Tho' his dread Eyes were *Basilisks*. Guards, haste, [ther.
Search the Queen's Lodgings; find, and force him hi-
[*Exeunt Guards.*
Joc. O, *OEdipus*, yet send,
And stop their Ent'rance, 'ere it be too late:
Unless you wish to see *Jocasta* rent
With Furies, slain out-right with meer Distraction,
Keep from your Eyes and mine the dreadful *Phorbas*.
Forbear this Search, I'll think you more than Mortal:
Will you yet hear me?
OEdip. Tempests will be heard,
And Waves will dash, tho' Rocks their basis keep,
But see, they Enter. If thou truly lov'st me,
Either forbear this Subject, or retire.
Enter Hæmon, *Guards, with* Phorbas.
Joc. Prepare then, wretched Prince, prepare to hear
A Story, that shall turn thee into Stone.
Could there be hew'n a monst'rous Gap in Nature,
A flaw made through the Center, by some God,
Through which the Groans of Ghosts might strike thy Ears,
They would not wound thee, as this Story will.
Hark, hark! a hollow Voice calls out aloud,
Jocasta: Yes, I'll to the Royal Bed, Where

Where first the Mysteries of our Loves were acted,
And double dye it with imperial Crimson;
Tear off this curling Hair,
Be gorg'd with Fire, stab every vital Part,
And, when at last I'm slain, to Crown the horrour,
My poor tormented Ghost shall cleave the Ground.
To try if Hell can yet more deeply wound. [Ex.

OEdip. She's gone; and as she went, methought her
Grew larger, while a thousand frantick Spirits [Eyes
Seething, like rising Bubbles, on the Brim,
Peep'd from the wat'ry Brink, and glow'd upon me.
I'll seek no more; but hush my Genius up
That throws me on my Fate.----Impossible!
O wretched Man, whose too-too busie Thoughts
Ride swifter than the galloping Heav'ns round,
With an eternal hurry of the Soul:
Nay, there's a Time when ev'n the rowling Year
Seems to stand still, dead Calms are in the Ocean,
When not a Breath disturbs the drowzy Waves:
But Man, the very Monster of the World,
Is ne'er at rest, the Soul for ever wakes.
Come then, since Destiny thus drives us on,
Let's know the Bottom. *Hæmon*, you I sent:
Where is that *Phorbas!*

Ham. Here, my Royal Lord.

OEdip. Speak first, *Ægeon*, say, is this the Man?

Æge. My Lord, it is: Tho' Time has plough'd that
With many Furrows since I saw it first; [Face
Yet I'm too well acquainted with the Ground, quite to-

OEdip. Peace; stand back awhile. [forget it.
Come hither Friend; I hear thy Name is *Phorbas.*
Why dost thou turn thy Face? I charge thee answer
To what I shall enquire: Wert thou not once
The Servant of King *Lajus* here in *Thebes?*

Phor. I was, great Sir, his true and faithful Servant;
Born and bredup in Court, no foreign Slave. [ployment?

OEdip. What Office hadst thou? what was thy Em-

Phor. He made me Lord of all his Rural Pleasures;
For much he lov'd 'em: Oft I entertain'd

With ſporting Swains, o'er whom I had command:
OEdip. Where was thy Reſidence? To what part o' [th' Country
Didſt thou moſt frequently reſort?
Phor. To Mount *Citharon*, and the pleaſant Vallies
Which all about lie ſhadowing its large Feet. [*Phorbas?*
OEdip. Come forth *Ægeon.* Ha! why ſtart'ſt thou
Forward I ſay, and Face to Face confront him;
Look wiſtly on him, through him, if thou canſt,
And tell me on thy Life, ſay, doſt thou know him?
Didſt thou e'er ſee him? converſe with him
Near Mount *Citharon!*
Phor. Who, my Lord, this Man?
OEdip. This Man, this old, this venerable Man:
Speak, did'ſt thou ever meet him there?
Phor. Where, ſacred Sir?
OEdip. Near Mount *Citharon*; anſwer to the Purpoſe,
'Tis a King ſpeaks; and Royal Minutes are
Of much more worth than thouſand Vulgar Years:
Did'ſt thou e'er ſee this Man near Mount *Citharon?*
Phor. Moſt ſure, my Lord, I have ſeen Lines like thoſe
His Viſage bears; but know not where, nor when.
Æge. Is't poſſible you ſhould forget your antient [Friend?
There are perhaps
Particulars, which may excite your dead Remem- [b'rance.
Have you forgot I took an Infant from you,
Doom'd to be murder'd in that gloomy Vale?
The Swadling-bands were Purple, wrought with Gold.
Have you forgot too how you wept, and beg'd
That I ſhould breed him up, and ask no more.
Phor. What e'er I beg'd; thou like a Dotard,
More than is requiſite: And what of this? [ſpeak'ſt
Why is it mention'd now? And why, O why
Doſt thou betray the Secrets of thy Friend?
Æge. Be not too raſh. That Infant grew at laſt
A King; and here the happy Monarch ſtands. [utter'd!
Phor. Ha! whither would'ſt thou? O what haſt thou
For what thou'ſt ſaid, Death ſtrike thee dumb forever.
OEdip. Forbear to curſe the Innocent; and be
Accurſt thy ſelf, thou ſhifting Traytor, Villain,
Damn'd Hypocrite, equivocating Slave. *Phor.*

Phor. O Heav'ns! wherein, my Lord, have I offended?
OEdip. Why ſpeak you not according to my Charge?
Bring forth the Rack; ſince Mildneſs cannot win you,
Torments ſhall force.
Phor. Hold, hold, O dreadful Sir;
You will not rack an innocent old Man.
OEdip. Speak then.
Phor. Alas, what would you have me ſay? [fant?
OEdip. Did this old Man take from your Arms an In-
Phor. He did: And, Oh! I wiſh to all the Gods,
Phorbas had periſh'd in that very Moment. [dying.
OEdip. Moment! Thou ſhalt be Hours, Days, Years a
Here, bind his Hands; he dallies with my Fury:
But I ſhall find a way-----
Phor. My Lord, I ſaid
I gave the Infant to him.
OEdip. Was he thy own, or given thee by another?
Phor. He was not mine, but given me by another.
OEdip. Whence? and from whom? what City?
Of what Houſe?
Phor. O, Royal Sir, I bow me to the Ground,
Would I could ſink beneath it: By the Gods,
I do Conjure you to inquire no more. [Rack;
OEdip. Furies and Hell! *Hæmon*, bring forth the
Fetch hither Cords, and Knives, and ſulphurous Flames:
He ſhall be bound, and gaſh'd, his Skin flead off,
And burnt alive.
Phor. O ſpare my Age.
OEdip. Riſe then, and ſpeak.
Phor. Dread Sir, I will.
OEdip. Who gave that Infant to thee?
Phor. One of King *Lajus* Family.
OEdip. O, you immortal Gods! But ſay, who was't?
Which of the Family of *Lajus* gave it?
A Servant; or one of the Royal Blood?
Phor. O wretched State! I die, unleſs I ſpeak;
And if I ſpeak, moſt certain Death attends me! [ſpeak,
OEdip. Thou ſhalt not die, ſpeak then, who was it?
While I have Senſe to underſtand the Horrour;
For I grow cold.

Phor.

Phor. The Queen *Jocasta* told me
It was her Son by *Lajus*.
OEdip. O you Gods! --- But did she give it thee?
Phor. My Lord, she did. [my Heart;
OEdip. Wherefore? for what? --- O break not yet,
Tho' my Eyes burst, no matter: wilt thou tell me,
Or must I ask for ever? for what End?
Why gave she thee her Child?
Phor. To murder it.
OEdip. O more than Savage! murder her own
Without a Cause! [Bowels!
Phor. There was a dreadful one
Which had foretold, that most unhappy Son
Should kill his Father, and enjoy his Mother.
OEdip. But one Thing more.
Jocasta told me thou wert by the Chariot
When the old King was slain; Speak, I conjure thee,
For I shall never ask thee ought again,
What was the Number of th' Assassinates?
Phor. The dreadful Deed was acted but by one;
And sure that one had much of your Resemblance.
OEdip. 'Tis well! I thank you, Gods! 'tis won-
Daggers, and Poison; O there is no need [d'rous well!
For my Dispath; And you, you merciless Pow'rs,
Hoord up your Thunder-stones; keep, keep your Bolts
For Crimes of little note. [*Falls.*
Adr. Help, *Ham.* help, and bow him gently forward;
Chafe, chafe his Temples: How the mighty Spirits,
Half strangled with the Damp his Sorrows rais'd,
Struggle for Vent: But see, he breathes again,
And vigorous Nature breaks through all Opposition.
How fares my Royal Friend?
OEdip. The worse for you.
O barbarous Men, and oh the hated Light,
Why did you force me back to curse the Day;
To curse my Friends; to blast with this dark Breath
The yet untainted Earth and circling Air? [down,
To raise new Plagues, and call new Vengeance
Why did you tempt the Gods, and dare to touch me?
Methinks

Methinks there's not a Hand that graſps this Hell,
But ſhould run up like Flax all blazing Fire.
Stand from this Spot, I wiſh you as my Friends,
And come not near me, leaſt the gaping Earth
Swallow you too—— Lo, I am gone already.
[*Draws, and claps his Sword to his Breaſt, which* Adraſtus *ſtrikes away with his Foot.*
Adr. You ſhall no more be truſted with your Life:
Creon, *Alcander*, *Hæmon*, help to hold him.
OEdip. Cruel *Adraſtus*! wilt thou, *Hæmon* too?
Are theſe the Obligations of my Friends?
O worſe than worſt of my moſt barbarous Foes!
Dear, dear *Adraſtus*, look with half an Eye
On my unheard-of Woes, and judge thy ſelf,
If it be fit that ſuch a Wretch ſhould live!
O, by theſe melting Eyes, unus'd to weep,
With all the low Submiſſions of a Slave,
I do conjure thee give my Horrors way;
Talk not of Life, for that will make me rave:
As well thou may'ſt adviſe a tortur'd Wretch,
All mangled o'er from Head to Foot with Wounds,
And his Bones broke, to wait a better Day.
Adr. My Lord, you ask me Things impoſſible;
And I with Juſtice ſhould be thought your Foe,
To leave you in this Tempeſt of your Soul.
Tir. Tho' baniſh'd *Thebes*, in *Corinth* you may Reign;
Th' infernal Pow'rs themſelves exact no more;
Calm then your Rage, and once more ſeek the Gods.
OEdip. I'll have no more to do with Gods, nor Men;
Hence, from my Arms, avaunt. Enjoy thy Mother!
What, violate, with Beaſtial Appetite,
The ſacred Veils that wrapt thee yet unborn!
This is not to be born! Hence; off, I ſay;
For they who let my Vengeance, make themſelves
Accomplices in my moſt horrid Guilt.
Adr. Let it be ſo; We'll fence Heav'n's Fury from you,
And ſuffer all together; This perhaps,
When Ruin comes, may help to break your Fall.
OEdip. O that, as oft I have at *Athens* ſeen
The Stage ariſe, and the big Clouds deſcend; So

So now in very Deed I might behold
The pond'rous Earth, and all yon Marble Roof
Meet, like the Hands of *Jove*, and cruſh Mankind;
For all the Elements, and all the Pow'rs
Cœleſtial, nay, Terreſtial and Infernal,
Conſpire the Rack of out-caſt *OEdipus*.
Fall Darkneſs then, and everlaſting Night
Shadow the Globe; may the Sun never dawn,
The Silver Moon be blotted from her Orb;
And for an Univerſal Rout of Nature
Through all the inmoſt Chambers of the Sky,
May there not be a glimpſe, one Starry Spark,
But Gods meet Gods, and juſtle in the Dark.
That Jars may riſe, and Wrath Divine be hurl'd,
Which may to Atoms ſhake the ſolid World. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter Creon, Alcander, *and* Pyracmon.

Cre.

THebes is at length my own; and all my Wiſhes,
Which ſure were great as Royalty e'er form'd,
Fortune and my auſpicious Stars have crown'd.
O Diadem, thou Center of Ambition.
Where all its different Lines are reconcil'd,
As if thou wert the Burning-glaſs of Glory!

Pyr. Might I be Counſeller, I would intreat you
To cool a little, Sir;
Find out *Eurydice*;
And, with the Reſolution of a Man
Mark'd out for Greatneſs, give the fatal Choice
Of Death, or Marriage.

Alc. Survey curs'd *OEdipus*,
As one who, tho' Unfortunate, belov'd,
Thought Innocent, and therefore much lamented

By

By all the *Thebans*; you must mark him dead;
Since nothing but his Death, not Banishment,
Can give Assurance to your doubtful Reign.
Cre. Well have you done, to snatch me from the Storm
Of racking Transport, where the little Streams
Of Love, Revenge, and all the under Passions,
As Waters are by sucking Whirl-pools drawn,
Were quite devour'd in the vast Gulph of Empire;
Therefore, *Pyracmon*, as you boldly urg'd,
Eurydice shall die, or be my Bride.
Alcander, summon to their Master's Aid
My menial Servants, and all those whom Change
Of State, and hope of the new Monarch's Favour,
Can win to take our Part; Away. What now?

[*Ex.* Alcander.

Enter Hæmon.

When *Hæmon* weeps, without the help of Ghosts,
I may foretel there is a fatal Cause.
Ham. Is't possible you should be ignorant
Of what has happen'd to the desperate King?
Cre. I know no more, but that he was conducted
Into his Closet, where I saw him fling
His trembling Body on the Royal Bed;
All left him there, at his Desire, alone;
But sure no Ill, unless he dy'd with Grief,
Could happen, for you bore his Sword away.
Ham. I did; and, having lock'd the Door, I stood;
And through a Chink I found, not only heard,
But saw him, when he thought no Eye beheld him;
At first, deep Sighs heav'd from his woeful Heart
Murmurs, and Groans, that shook the outward Rooms;
And art thou still alive, Oh Wretch! he cry'd;
Then groan'd again, as if his sorrowful Soul
Had crack'd the Strings of Life, and burst away.
Cre. I weep to hear; how then should I have griev'd,
Had I beheld this wond'rous Heap of Sorrow!
But, to the fatal Period.
Ham. Thrice he struck,
With all his Force, his hollow groaning Breast,

And

And thus, with Out-cries, to himſelf complain'd.
But thou canſt weep then, and thou think'ſt 'tis well,
Theſe Bubbles of the ſhalloweſt emptieſt Sorrow,
Which Children vent for Toys, and Women rain
For any Trifle their fond Hearts are ſet on;
Yet theſe thou think'ſt are ample Satisfaction
For bloodieſt Murder, and for burning Luſt;
No, Parricide; if thou muſt weep, weep Blood;
Weep Eyes, inſtead of Tears; O, by the Gods,
'Tis greatly thought, he cry'd, and fits my Woes.
Which ſaid, he ſmil'd revengefully, and leapt
Upon the Floor; thence gazing at the Skies,
His Eye-balls fiery Red, and glowing Vengeance;
Gods, I accuſe you not, tho' I no more
Will view your Heav'n, 'till with more durable Glaſſes.
The mighty Souls immortal Perſpectives.
I find your dazling Beings; Take, he cry'd,
Take, Eyes, your laſt, your fatal Farewel-view.
When with a Groan, that ſeem'd the Call of Death,
With horrid Force lifting his impious Hands,
He ſnatch'd, he tore, from forth their bloody Orbs,
The Balls of Sight, and daſh'd 'em on the Ground.

Cre. A Maſter-piece of Horror; new and dreadful!

Ham. I ran to ſuccour him; but, oh! too late;
For he had pluck'd the remnant Strings away,
What then remains, but that I find *Tireſias*,
Who, with his Wiſdom, may allay thoſe Furies
That haunt his gloomy Soul? [*Ex.*

Cre. Heav'n will reward
Thy care; moſt honeſt, faithful, fooliſh *Hæmon*.
But ſee, *Alcander* enters, well attended.

Enter Alcander *attended.*

I ſee thou haſt been diligent.

Alc. Nothing theſe,
For Number, to the Crowds that ſoon will follow;
Be reſolute,
And call your utmoſt Fury to revenge.

Cre. Ha! thou haſt given
Th' Alarm to Cruelty; and never may

Theſe

These Eyes be clos'd, 'till they behold *Adraſtus*
Stretch'd at the Feet of falſe *Eurydice*.
But ſee, they're here! retire a while, and mark.

Enter Adraſtus, *and* Eurydice, *attended*.

Adr. Alas, *Eurydice*, what fond raſh Man,
What inconſiderate and ambitious Fool,
That ſhall hereafter read the Fate of *OEdipus*,
Will dare, with his frail Hand, to graſp a Scepter?

Eur. 'Tis true, a Crown ſeems dreadful, and I wiſh
That you and I, more lowly plac'd, might paſs
Our ſofter Hours in humble Cells away:
Not but I love you to that infinite Height,
I could (O wond'rous Proof of fierceſt Love!)
Be greatly wretched in a Court with you.

Adr. Take then this moſt lov'd Innocence away;
Fly from tumultuous *Thebes*,
From Blood and Murder,
Fly from the Author of all Villanies,
Rapes, Death, and Treaſon, from that Fury *Creon*:
Vouchſafe that I, o'er-joy'd, may bear you hence,
And at your Feet preſent the Crown of *Argos*.

[Creon *and Attendants come up to him.*

Cre. I have o'er-heard thy black Deſign, *Adraſtus*.
And therefore, as a Traytor to this State,
Death ought to be thy Lot: Let it ſuffice
That *Thebes* ſurveys thee as a Prince; abuſe not
Her proffer'd Mercy, but retire betimes,
Leſt ſhe repent, and haſten on thy Doom.

Adr. Think not, moſt abject,
Moſt abhor'd of Men,
Adraſtus will vouchſafe to anſwer thee;
Thebans, to you I juſtifie my Love:
I have addreſt my Prayers to this fair Princeſs;
But, if I ever meant a Violence,
Or thought to Raviſh, as that Traytor did,
What humbleſt Adorations could not win;
Brand me, you Gods, blot me with foul Diſhonour,
And let Men curſe me by the Name of *Creon*!

Eur. Hear me, O *Thebans*, if you dread the Wrath

Of her whom Fate ordain'd to be your Queen,
Hear me, and dare not, as you prize your Lives,
To take the Part of that Rebellious Traytor.
By the Decree of Royal *OEdipus*,
By Queen *Jocasta*'s Order, by what's more,
My own dear Vows of everlasting Love,
I here resign to Prince *Adrastus* Arms
All that the World can make me Mistress of.
Cre. O perjur'd Woman!
Draw all; and when I give the Word, fall on.
Traytor, resign the Princess, or this moment
Expect, with all those most unfortunate Wretches,
Upon this spot straight to be hewn in pieces.
Adr. No, Villain, no;
With twice those odds of Men,
I doubt not in this Cause to vanquish thee.
Captain, remember to your Care I give
My Love; ten thousand thousand Times more Dear
Than Life, or Liberty.
Cre. Fall on, *Alcander*.
Pyracmon, you and I must wheel about
For nobler Game, the Princess.
Adr. Ah, Traytor, dost thou shun me?
Follow, follow,
My brave Companions; see, the Cowards fly.
[*Ex. fighting*: Creon's *Party beaten off by* Adrastus.

Enter OEdipus.

OEdip. O, 'tis too little this, thy loss of Sight,
What has it done? I shall be gaz'd at now
The more; be pointed at, there goes the Monster!
Nor have I hid my Horrors from my self;
For tho' corporeal Light be lost for ever,
The bright reflecting Soul, thro' glaring Opticks,
Presents in larger Size her black Ideas,
Doubling the bloody Prospect of my Crimes:
Holds Fancy down, and makes her act again,
With Wife and Mother, Tortures, Hell and Furies.
Ha! now the baleful Off-spring's brought to light!
In horrid Form they rank themselves before me:
What shall I call this Medley of Creation? Here

Here one, with all th' Obedience of a Son,
Borrowing *Jocasta*'s Look, kneels at my Feet,
And calls me Father: There a sturdy Boy,
Resembling *Lajus* just as when I kill'd him,
Bears up, and with his cold Hand grasping mine,
Cries out, how fares my Brother *OEdipus*?
What, Sons and Brothers! Sisters and Daughters too!
Fly all, be gone, fly from my whirling Brain;
Hence, Incest, Murder; hence, you ghastly Figures!
O Gods! Gods, answer; is there any mean?
Let me go mad, or die.

Enter Jocasta.

Joc. Where, where is this most wretched of Mankind,
This stately Image of Imperial Sorrow,
Whose Story told, whose very Name but mention'd,
Would cool the Rage of Feavers, and unlock
The Hand of Lust from the pale Virgin's Hair,
And throw the Ravisher before her Feet?

OEdip. By all my Fears, I think *Jocasta*'s Voice!
Hence; fly; be gone! O thou far worse than worst
Of damning Charmers! O abhor'd, loath'd Creature!
Fly, by the Gods, or by the Fiends, I charge thee,
Far as the East, West, North, or South of Heav'n,
But think not thou shalt ever enter there:
The Golden Gates are barr'd with Adamant,
'Gainst thee, and me; and the Cœlestial Guards,
Sill as we rise, will dash our Spirits down.

Joc. O wretched Pair! O greatly wretched we!
Two Worlds of Woe!

OEdip. Art thou not gone then? Ha!
How dar'st thou stand the Fury of the Gods?
Or com'st thou in the Grave to reap new Pleasures?

Joc. Talk on, 'till thou mak'st mad my rowling Brain;
Groan still more Death; and may those dismal Sources
Still bubble on, and pour forth Blood and Tears.
Methinks, at such a Meeting, Heav'n stands still;
The Sea nor Ebbs, nor Flows: This Mole-hill Earth
Is heav'd no more: The busy Emmets cease;
Yet hear me on——

OEdip. Speak then, and blast my Soul.

Joc. O, my lov'd Lord, tho' I reſolve a Ruin
To match my Crimes; by all my Miſeries,
'Tis Horror, worſe than thouſand thouſand Deaths,
To ſend me hence without a kind Farewel.
OEdip. Gods, how ſhe ſhakes me! ſtay thee, O *Jocaſta*,
Speak ſomething 'ere thou goeſt for ever from me.
Joc. 'Tis Woman's Weakneſs, that I wou'd be pity'd;
Pardon me then, O Greateſt, tho' moſt Wretched,
Of all thy Kind: My Soul is on the Brink,
And ſees the boiling Furnace juſt beneath:
Do not thou puſh me off, and I will go,
With ſuch a Willingneſs, as if that Heav'n
With all its Glory glow'd for my Reception.
OEdip. O, in my Heart, I feel the Pangs of Nature;
It works with Kindneſs o'er: Give, give me way;
I feel a Melting here, a Tenderneſs,
Too mighty for the Anger of the Gods!
Direct me to thy Knees: Yet, oh, forbear,
Leaſt the dead Embers ſhould revive,
Stand off------ and at juſt Diſtance
Let me groan my Horrors------here
On the Earth, here blow my utmoſt Gale;
Here ſob my Sorrows, 'till I burſt with Sighing:
Here Gaſp and Languiſh out my wounded Soul.
Joc. In ſpight of all thoſe Crimes the cruel Gods
Can charge me with, I know my Innocence;
Know yours: 'Tis Fate alone that makes us wretched,
For you are ſtill my Husband.
OEdip. Swear I am,
And I'll believe thee; ſteal into thy Arms,
Renew Endearments, think 'em no Pollutions,
But chaſte as Spirits Joys: Gently I'll come,
Thus weeping blind, like dewy Night, upon thee,
And fold thee ſoftly in my Arms to ſlumber.
[*The Ghoſt of* Lajus *aſcends by degrees, pointing at* Jocaſta.
Joc. Be gone, my Lord! Alas, what are we doing?
Fly from my Arms! Whirl-winds, Seas, Continents,
And Worlds, divide us! O thrice happy thou,
Who has no Uſe of Eyes; for here's a Sight Would

Would turn the melting Face of Mercy's ſelf
To a wild Fury.
OEdip. Ha! What ſeeſt thou there?
Joc. The Spirit of my Husband! O the Gods!
How wan he looks!
OEdip. Thou rav'ſt; thy Husband's here.
Joc. There, there he mounts
In circling Fire, amongſt the bluſhing Clouds!
And ſee, he waves *Jocaſta* from the World!
Ghoſt. Jocaſta, OEdipus, [*Vaniſh with Thunder.*
OEdip. What would'ſt thou have?
Thou know'ſt I cannot come to thee, detain'd
In Darkneſs here, and kept from Means of Death.
I've heard a Spirit's Force is wonderful;
At whoſe Approach, when ſtarting from his Dungeon,
The Earth does ſhake, and the old Ocean groans;
Rocks are remov'd, and Tow'rs are thund'red down:
And Walls of Braſs, and Gates of Adamant
Are paſſable as Air, and fleet like Winds.
Joc. Was that a Raven's Croak; or my Son's Voice?
No matter which; I'll to the Grave and hide me.
Earth open, or I'll tear thy Bowels up.
Hark! He goes on, and blabs the Deed of Inceſt.
OEdip. Strike then imperial Ghoſt; daſh all at once
This Houſe of Clay into a thouſand Pieces;
That my poor ling'ring Soul may take her Flight
To your immortal Dwellings.
Joc. Haſte thee then,
Or I ſhall be before thee: See, thou can'ſt not ſee;
Then I will tell thee that my Wings are on;
I'll mount, I'll fly, and with a Port Divine
Glide all along the gaudy milky Soil,
To find my *Lajus* out; ask every God
In his bright Palace, if he knows my *Lajus*,
My murder'd *Lajus!*
OEdip. Ha! How's this, *Jocaſta?*
Nay, if thy Brain be ſick, then thou art happy.
Joc. Ha! Will you not? Shall I not find him out?
Will you not ſhow him? Are my Tears deſpis'd?

Why, then I'll thunder, yes, I will be mad,
And fright you with my Cries; yes, cruel Gods,
Tho' Vultures, Eagles, Dragons tear my Heart,
I'll ſnatch cœleſtial Flames, fire all your Dwellings,
Melt down your golden Roofs, and make your Doors
Of Chryſtal fly from off their Diamond Hinges;
Drive you all out from your Ambroſial Hives,
To ſwarm like Bees about the Field of Heav'n;
This will I do, unleſs you ſhew me *Lajus*,
My Dear, my murder'd Lord. O *Lajus! Lajus! Lajus!*
[*Ex.* Jocaſta.

OEdip. Excellent Grief! why, this is as it ſhould be!
No Mourning can be ſuitable to Crimes
Like ours, but what Death makes, or Madneſs forms.
I cou'd have wiſh'd methought for Sight again,
To mark the Gallantry of her Diſtraction.
Her blazing Eyes darting the wand'ring Stars,
T'have ſeen her mouth the Heav'ns, and mate the Gods,
While with her thund'ring Voice ſhe menac'd high,
And every Accent twang'd with ſmarting Sorrow;
But what's all this to thee? Thou, Coward, yet
Art living, can'ſt not, wilt not find the Road
To the great Palace of magnificent Death;
Tho' thouſand Ways lead to his thouſand Doors,
Which Day and Night are ſtill unbarr'd for all.
[*Claſhing of Swords: Drums and Trumpets without.*
Hark! 'tis the Noiſe of claſhing Swords! the Sound
Comes near. O, that a Battel wou'd come o'er me!
If I but graſp a Sword, or wreſt a Dagger,
I'll make a Ruin with the firſt that falls.

Enter Hæmon, *with Guards.*

Ham. Seize him, and bear him to the Weſtern Tow'r.
Pardon me, Sacred Sir; I am inform'd
That *Creon* has Deſigns upon your Life.
Forgive me then, if, to preſerve you from him,
I order your Confinement.

OEdip. Slaves, unhand me.
I think thou haſt a Sword. 'Twas the wrong ſide.
Yet, cruel *Hæmon*, think not I will live;
He that could tear his Eyes out, ſure can find Some

Some desperate Way to stifle this curst Breath,
Or if I starve! But that's a ling'ring Fate:
Or if I leave my Brains upon the Wall!
The aiery Soul can easily o'er-shoot
Those Bounds with which thou striv'st to Pale her in.
Yes, I will perish in despite of thee;
And, by the Rage that stirs me, if I meet thee
In t'other World, I'll curse thee for this Usage. [*Exit.*

Ham. Tiresias, after him; and, with your Counsel,
Advise him humbly; charm, if possible,
These Feuds within, while I without extinguish,
Or perish in th' Attempt, the furious *Creon*;
That Brand which sets our City in a Flame.

Tir. Heav'n prosper your Intent, and give a Period
To all our Plagues: What old *Tiresias* can,
Shall straight be done. Lead, *Manto*, to the Tow'r.
[*Ex.* Tir. *and* Mant.

Ham. Follow me all, and help to part this Fray,
[*Trumpets again.*
Or fall together in the bloody Broil. [*Ex.*

Enter Creon *with* Eurydice, Pyracmon *and his Party giving Ground to* Adrastus.

Cre. Hold, hold your Arms, *Adrastus* Prince of *Argos*,
Hear, and behold; *Eurydice* is my Prisoner.

Adr. What would'st thou, Hell-hound?

Cre. See this brandish'd Dagger:
Forego th' Advantage which thy Arm has won,
Or, by the Blood which trembles thro' the Heart
Of her, whom more than Life, I know thou lov'st,
I'll bury to the Haft, in her fair Breast,
This Instrument of my Revenge. [bloody Hand!

Adr. Stay thee, damn'd Wretch; hold, stop thy

Cre. Give order then, that on this Instant, now,
This moment, all thy Soldiers straight disband.

Adr. Away, my Friends, since Fate has so allotted.
Be gone, and leave me to the Villain's Mercy.

Eur. Ah, my *Adrastus!* Call 'em, call 'em back!
Stand there; come back! O cruel, barbarous Men!
Could you then leave your Lord, your Prince, your King,
After so bravely having fought his Cause, To

To perish by the Hand of this base Villain?
Why rather rush you not at once together
All to his Ruin? Drag him thro' the Streets,
Hang his contagious Quarters on the Gates;
Nor let my Death affright you.
Cre. Die first thy self then.
Adr. O, I charge thee hold.
Hence, from my Presence all: He's not my Friend
That disobeys: See, art thou now appeas'd?
[*Ex. Attendants.*
Or is there ought else yet remains to do,
That can attone thee? Slack thy thirst of Blood
With mine; but save, O save that innocent Wretch.
Cre. Forego thy Sword, and yield thy self my Prisoner.
Eur. Yet while there's any dawn of Hope to save
Thy precious Life, my dear *Adrastus*,
What-e'er thou dost, deliver not thy Sword;
With that thou may'st get off, tho' Odds oppose thee.
For me, O fear not; no, he dares not touch me;
His horrid Love will spare me. Keep thy Sword;
Least I be Ravish'd after thou art slain.
Adr. Instruct me, Gods, what shall *Adrastus* do?
Cre. Do what thou wilt, when she is dead, my Soldiers
With Numbers will o'er-pow'r thee. Is't thy Wish
Eurydice should fall before thee?
Adr. Traytor, no.
Better that thou and I, and all Mankind
Should be no more.
Cre. Then cast thy Sword away,
And yield thee to my Mercy, or I strike. [*pause.*
Adr. Hold thy rais'd Arm; give me a moment's
My Father, when he blest me, gave me this:
My Son, said he, let this be thy last Refuge;
If thou forego'st it, Misery attends thee:
Yet Love now charms it from me; which in all
The Hazards of my Life I never lost.
'Tis thine, my faithful Sword, my only trust;
Tho' my Heart tells me that the Gift is fatal.
Cre. Fatal! Yes, fooliſh Love-sick Prince, it shall.
Thy Arrogance, thy Scorn, My

My Wound's remembrance,
Turn all at once the fatal Point on thee.
Pyracmon, to the Palace, dispatch
The King; hang *Hæmon* up, for he is Loyal,
And will oppose me: Come, Sir, are you ready?
Adr. Yes, Villain, for what-ever thou can'st dare.
Eur. Hold, *Creon*, or thro' me, thro' me you wound.
Adr. Off, Madam, or we perish both; behold
I'm not unarm'd, my Ponyard's in my Hand:
Therefore away.
Eur. I'll guard your Life with mine.
Cre. Die both then; there is now no time for dallying.
[*Kills* Eurydice.
Eur. Ah, Prince, farewel; farewel, my dear *Adrastus*.
[*Dies.*
Adr. Unheard of Monster! Eldest born of Hell!
Down to thy primitive Flames. [*Stabs* Creon.
Cre. Help, Soldiers, help; revenge me.
Adr. More; yet more; a thousand Wounds!
I'll stamp thee still, thus to the gaping Furies.
[Adrastus *falls, kill'd by the Soldiers.*
Enter Hæmon, *Guards, with* Alcander *and* Pyracmon *bound; the Assassins are driven off.*
O *Hæmon*, I am slain; nor need I name
Th' inhuman Author of all Villanies;
There he lies gasping.
Cre. If I must plunge in Flames,
Burn first my Arm; base Instrument, unfit
To act the Dictates of my daring Mind:
Burn, burn for ever, O weak Substitute
Of the God, Ambition. [*Dies.*
Adr. She's gone; O deadly Marks-man, in the Heart!
Yet in the Pangs of Death she grasps my Hand.
Her Lips too tremble, as if she would speak
Her last Farewel. O, *OEdipus*, thy Fall
Is great; and nobly now thou goest attended!
They talk of Heroes, and Cœlestial Beauties,
And wond'rous Pleasures in the other World;
Let me but find her there, I ask no more. [*Dies.*
Enter

Enter a Captain *to* Hæmon; *with* Tireſias *and* Manto.

Cap. O, Sir, the Queen *Jocaſta*, ſwift and wild,
As a rob'd Tygreſs bounding o'er the Woods,
Has acted Murders that amaze Mankind.
In twiſted Gold I ſaw her Daughters hang
On the Bed-Royal, and her little Sons
Stab'd thro' the Breaſts upon the bloody Pillows.

Hæm. Relentleſs Heav'ns! Is then the Fate of *Lajus*
Never to be atton'd? How ſacred ought
Kings Lives be held, when but the Death of one
Demands an Empire's Blood for Expiation?
But ſee! The furious mad *Jocaſta*'s here.

Scene draws, and diſcovers Jocaſta *held by her Women, and ſtab'd in many Places of her Boſom, her Hair diſhevel'd; her Children ſlain upon the Bed.*

Was ever yet a Sight of ſo much Horrour,
And Pity brought to View!

Joc. Ah, cruel Women!
Will you not let me take my laſt Farewel
Of thoſe dear Babes? O let me run and ſeal
My melting Soul upon their bubling Wounds!
I'll print upon their coral Mouths ſuch Kiſſes,
As ſhall recal their wand'ring Spirits home!
Let me go, let me go, or I will tear you Piece-meal.
Help, *Hæmon*, help:
Help, *OEdipus*; help, Gods; *Jocaſta* dies.

Enter OEdipus *above.*

OEdip. I've found a Window, and I thank the Gods
'Tis quite unbarr'd: Sure by the diſtant Noiſe,
The Height will fit my fatal Purpoſe well.

Joc. What hoa, my *OEdipus*! See, where he ſtands!
His groping Ghoſt is lodg'd upon a Tow'r,
Nor can it find the Road: Mount, mount, my Soul;
I'll wrap thy ſhivering Spirit in Lambent Flames! and ſo
But ſee! we're landed on the happy Coaſt; [we'll ſail:
And all the golden Strands are cover'd o'er
With glorious Gods, that come to try our Cauſe.
Jove, *Jove*, whoſe Majeſty now ſinks me down,
He who himſelf burns in unlawful Fires,
Shall judge, and ſhall acquit us. O, 'tis done; 'Tis

'Tis fixt by Fate, upon Record Divine;
And *OEdipus* shall now be ever mine. [*Dies.*
OEdip. Speak, *Haemon*; what has Fate been doing
What dreadful Deed has mad *Jocasta* done? [there?
Hæm. The Queen her self, and all your wretched
Are by her Fury slain. [Off-spring,
OEdip. By all my Woes,
She has out-done me, in Revenge and Murder;
And I should envy her the sad Applause:
But, Oh! my Children! Oh, what have they done?
This was not like the Mercy of the Heav'ns,
To set her Madness on such Cruelty.
This stirs me more than all my Sufferings,
And with my last Breath I must call you Tyrants.
Hæm. What mean you, Sir?
OEdip. Jocasta! Lo, I come.
O *Lajus*, *Labdacus*, and all you Spirits
Of the *Cadmean* Race, prepare to meet me,
All weeping rang'd along the gloomy Shore:
Extend your Arms t' embrace me, for I come;
May all the Gods too from their Battlements
Behold, and wonder at a Mortal's daring:
And, when I knock the Goal of dreadful Death,
Shout and applaud me with a clap of Thunder.
Once more, thus wing'd by horrid Fate, I come
Swift as a falling Meteor; lo, I fly,
And thus go downwards to the darker Sky.
[*Thunder. He flings himself from the Window: The* Thebans *gather about his Body.*
Hæm. O Prophet, *OEdipus* is now no more!
O curs'd Effect of the most deep Dispair!
Tir. Cease your Complaints, and bear his Body hence;
The dreadful Sight will daunt the drooping *Thebans*,
Whom Heav'n decrees to raise with Peace and Glory.
Yet, by these terrible Examples warn'd,
The sacred Fury thus alarms the World.
Let none, tho' ne'er so Vertuous, Great and High,
Be judg'd entirely blest before they Die.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

WHAT Sophocles could undertake alone,
Our Poets found a Work for more than one;
And therefore Two lay tugging at the Piece,
With all their Force, to draw their pond'rous Maſs
A Weight that bent ev'n Seneca's ſtrong Muſe, [from Greece.
And which Corneille's Shoulders did refuſe.
So hard it is th' Athenian Harp to ſtring!
So much two Conſuls yield to one juſt King.
Terrour and Pity this whole Poem ſway;
The mightieſt Machines that can mount a Play;
How heavy will theſe Vulgar Souls be found,
Whom two ſuch Engines cannot move from Ground?
When Greece and Rome have ſmil'd upon this Birth,
You can but Damn for one poor ſpot of Earth;
And when your Children find your Judgment ſuch,
They'll ſcorn their Sires, and wiſh themſelves born Dutch;
Each haughty Poet will inſer with eaſe,
How much his Wit muſt under-write to pleaſe.
As ſome ſtrong Churl would brandiſhing advance
The monumental Sword that conquer'd France;
So you, by judging this, your Judgments teach
Thus far you like, that is, thus far you reach.
Since then the Vote of full two thouſand Years
Has Crown'd this Plot, and all the Dead are theirs,
Think it a Debt you pay, not Alms you give,
And in your own Defence, let this Play live.
Think 'em not vain, when Sophocles is ſhown,
To praiſe his Worth they humbly doubt their own.
Yet as weak States each other's Pow'r aſſure,
Weak Poets by Conjunction are ſecure.
Their Treat is what your Palates reliſh moſt,
Charm! Song! and Show! a Murder and a Ghoſt!
We know not what you can deſire or hope,
To pleaſe you more, but burning of a Pope.

FINIS.